THE CHILD *as* GOD'S CHILD

Charles W. Rishell

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THE CHILD
AS
GOD'S CHILD

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DEDICATION

To
MY WIFE
Who shares the views expressed
in the following pages, and

To
OUR DAUGHTERS
Who exemplify the beneficent
results of her training according
to the ideas here advocated

TO THE READER

This book is a plea for the religious rights of the child.

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THE CHILD AS GOD'S CHILD

CHAPTER I

The Possibility

CAN a child be religious? It is a strange question in an age when not a few are ready to predicate religion of animals. And especially is it surprising in view of the very general recognition in modern thought of the religious instinct as a constituent element in human nature. But the religion of animals and of untutored men is vague and indefinite. It exists rather unrecognized than recognized. Can a little child be religious in the definite sense implied by the educated Christian man's use of the term? To this the answer must be, No; and for the very good reason that the child is not a man and is not educated.

IN WHAT SENSE RELIGIOUS

In what sense, then, can a child be religious? It cannot recognize itself as religious. This would imply a knowledge of the meaning of words and a power of abstraction, judgment, and generalization far beyond the capacity of

many full-grown men. If the power to analyze its own inner life and to distinguish and classify its mental states and activities were necessary to religion the child could not be religious. But religious feelings and activities are no more dependent upon such power of discrimination than intellectual activities or the presence of the social feelings in childhood are dependent upon a knowledge of psychology. The child may love or be religious without being able to say, "I love," or, "I am religious." Mental facts must exist before we take cognizance of them, and they generally exist long before that power of introspection is developed which enables us intelligently to apprehend them.

Equally impossible to a little child is religion in the sense of a definite and elaborate set or system of religious ideas. The ideas of omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, and of infinity in general must of necessity be extremely vague to the child mind. So also must it be with the idea of spirituality, which could be understood by the child at best only negatively. The child's idea of God, metaphysically considered, cannot but be unsatisfactory from the standpoint of the philosopher. The same must be said of many other religious

ideas, such as sin, forgiveness, regeneration, immortality, judgment, retribution.

Not only are these ideas vague and indefinite in the minds of children; they are often incorrectly conceived. At this point it is that the deniers of the possibility of religion in children find their chief support. They delight to dwell upon instances of anthropomorphic misconceptions of God and his relations to this world. And if religion depended upon correct religious conceptions children could not be religious. But there is no such relation of dependence here any more than there is between nutrition and a correct knowledge of the chemistry of food, which, by a good providence of God, most people get on reasonably well without.

But so do the majority of adults get on religiously without clear ideas of religious theory. And it is this lack of correct conceptions in adults to which we must trace most of the defective or erroneous religious notions of childhood. Where did these children get their ludicrously anthropomorphic ideas of God but from their elders? That children acquire such concepts does not prove that children should not be taught, but that they should be better taught. Were the reasoning that is applied by some to this subject employed in

the sphere of general education we should have to forbid all attempts to teach children. For even in schools whose teachers are entirely well qualified for their task the examinations of the pupils reveal a most ludicrous state of ignorance and misapprehension in the common branches. Incorrect conceptions are by no means confined to religion.[1] But it is not impossible to give to children relatively correct though incomplete religious ideas. The exact age at which correct religious ideas of various kinds may be found in children cannot be definitely fixed. Some may be correctly conceived earlier, some later; and the age will vary with different children. But as soon as a child gets the concept of visible being it can have that of invisible being. The reality of the one it will no more question than of the other. At the dawn of the thought of causation may be apprehended the idea of God as omnipotent Creator. The invisibility and activity of God are principal ingredients in the thought of his spirituality. Upon the child's first conception of

[1] Rousseau and Kant held that religious instruction was appropriate to youth rather than to childhood—the former on the ground that the child can see God only with the imagination, and that this interferes with the later conception of him by the understanding; the latter because religious ideas always presuppose some system of theology which is beyond the powers of the child.

self may easily be grafted the thought of God as a person. When the child learns the theory of space so far as to know the meaning of "here" and "there" it is prepared to conceive the idea of omnipresence; and when it knows past, present, and future it can be made to know something of eternity. The practical acquaintance of the child with knowledge and ignorance furnishes the necessary preparation for the thought of omniscience.

What is here meant is not that the child can understand these portentous terms; much less that it can relate the ideas they convey or see in them what well-instructed adults see in them. The wisdom of using such words in the impartation of religious ideas to the very young is decidedly open to question. But it is a fact that a child can get a practically correct conception of what is meant by certain untechnical religious propositions, such as: "Some things there are that you can see and feel and smell and taste and hear; but there is One whom you cannot see, feel, smell, taste, or hear. This One is everywhere, can do all things, knows all things, always has been, and always will be." And it is not difficult with these ideas in the mind of the child to teach him how different God is from every one of us, and yet how much

he is like us in the possession of purpose and choice. In some instances the child might indeed misapprehend, but he will not misapprehend seriously if he is intelligently taught. The failure will not result from the difficulty of the ideas so much as from the ignorance or incapacity of the teacher.

How much of this religious knowledge should be imparted to a child is not here considered, but as far as any or all the ideas mentioned are necessary to childhood religion they may be easily acquired. So that the opponents of religion in children have no standing ground left. That the ideas are vague and incomplete is nothing to the purpose unless we were to make it a principle of pedagogy that nothing is to be taught until the mind can fully comprehend.

Perhaps few would be so venturesome as to affirm that in the more intimate sense religion is impossible to children. Gratitude, love, the desire to please, obedience, right, wrong, dependence are feelings and activities of the child mind from very early infancy. Prayer, praise, Bible reading, church attendance, and other religious practices are not alien to the child's conceptions of the proper and fitting; though there may be times when other impulses, holy

or unholy, will prompt him to prefer omitting them. That in all respects in which it could be expected of them multitudes of children have been and are religious can admit of no dispute with those who are conversant with the facts. That it should be so argues no precocity or abnormality, but rather a healthy, normal state of the child mind under proper training. Among the many things that Jesus must have meant by his pregnant saying about the necessity of our becoming as little children must be included this—that the piety suitable to a child contains about all the elements necessary in the religion of an adult, except, perhaps, its expression.

Unreasonable Demands

One cannot but be surprised at the unreasonable demands made upon children in the matter of religion. In every other department of life they are expected to display only so much progress as comports with their physical and intellectual capacities. In religion, on the other hand, it is expected by many that they will exhibit perfection from the start. This is, no doubt, due in part to the erroneous idea that religion is a sort of divine gift bestowed upon us from without—a something which

must be bestowed entire or not at all—rather than a divine influence operating differently upon different hearts according as each has capacity to receive it. That such gradations exist, and that they are conditioned by temperament and the like, must be evident to everyone who studies the lives of adult Christians. The imperfections of child Christians should surely be as leniently dealt with as those of adults, and we should no more expect all children to manifest equal degrees of religious interest and power than we expect them in adults. If some are not as manifestly religious as others we should not at once leap to the conclusion that the lack is an indication of absolute irreligion. And while in the realm of morals we may be more anxious about any exhibition of vice in children than we would be for the same vice in adults—because we know the character of the latter and see that it is a departure from the main trend, while in the child we cannot tell but that it may indicate the main trend—still we should not judge a child's religion too severely because it is insufficient to control the life with absolute sovereignty. Religion and morals are not always intimate companions in adults; much less can we expect that they should be in children.

CHAPTER II

The Propriety

Groundlessness of Objections

Much prejudice has been aroused against religion in children because of the precocious, morbid, or hothouse character of it in many of its historical instances. That children or younger young people should pray or speak publicly with the freedom of adults is unnatural and shocking to educated sensibilities. The boy evangelist may be sincere, and even effective, but he is a monstrosity. That such manifestations, even on a smaller scale, should be offensive and arouse prejudice against any well-marked religious development in the very young is not surprising, for it is a sure evidence that the child's feelings have outrun his judgment. But the religion of children need not be of this type; nor should it be. Undue repression should, of course, be avoided; but so also should undue and abnormal expression. Encouragement should be given only to that kind of religious life which manifests itself in reverence, confidence, acquiescence in the provi-

dence of God, gratitude, love to God and man, and the like. While there may be exceptions, the rule here is, as elsewhere, that children should be seen, not heard. Nevertheless, although there is justification for the revulsion of feeling which arises when we see public religious manifestations, whether in children or adults, which we regard as not sufficiently founded in thought or character, there is no ground for objection to a religious life suitable to each age and stage of development in human life.

From still another widely different standpoint the propriety of child religion has been questioned. It is evident that if children are to have any definite religious conceptions or forms they must learn them from others. If one could conceive a generation of children left entirely to themselves they would not develop religious ideas or ceremonies until they had long passed the stage of childhood and youth. It is claimed, therefore, that religion, so far as it is superimposed upon children from without, is a violation of their rights, that it hinders their free development and makes them what they would not naturally be. Thus they grow up to be not wholly themselves, but, at least in part, bear the character of others.

The right claimed, then, for the child is the right to be itself and to develop according to its own inner nature. But how singular that this claim is confined to the matter of religion! The very same people who are loudest in their demand that the child shall not be filled with religious prejudices are also among the most determined that the child shall not be left to itself in any other line of individual development. Nor can these objectors hide behind the fact that there are differences of opinion in matters of religion, while the elements of scientific knowledge are common to all; for these people entertain, and inculcate in the minds of their children, very definite ideas as to society, government, and manners, notwithstanding many all about them maintain views quite diverse from their own.

Still others emphasize the thought that when the child grows up he may regret that he was taught and trained in the doctrines and practices of religion, and that religion will thus be made odious to those who might have chosen it freely for themselves if it had not been forced on them. But do we not incur the same risk in the secular education of our children? It is by no means uncommon for men and women to wish that a different course had been pur-

sued in their school life than that chosen for them—that more or that less time had been given to language, ancient or modern; that this rather than the other language had been taught them; that their teaching had included more or less of certain sciences, of history, and the like; or even that they had been allowed more time or less time for their school life. There are numberless young men who feel that their college days are wasted days so far as real benefit is concerned, and are kept in college only by a sort of parental compulsion. Who can tell beforehand what the individual will prefer when he attains the years of manhood? And the fact that no one can foretell does not justify waiting for the training of a youth until he is old enough to express and follow his own mature and final choice. The child's training must go forward. If when he grows to maturity he does not approve that training he can take measures to change the direction in which he was started. But there are few indeed who would wish that they had had no training at all.

There are other aspects of the question which the opposers of child religion on the grounds now considered appear to forget. One of these is the duty of the parents and of the community

to the child. If the child has its rights the child's elders have their obligations. And these elders alone can determine what those obligations are. That they should be governed in this respect by the thought that the child grown to be an adult might not approve the action taken does not excuse them for inaction. Especially is this true of the parents, to whom by nature and by law is committed the care of the child. They must take the responsibility. If they decide to give religious training the child may later not approve; if they decide to omit it the child may not approve. The disapproval, in a world constituted as ours is, would be more certain in the latter case than in the former. But some decision parents must reach on this momentous question. What more natural than for them to decide in favor of what they have found to be the most important single factor in their own welfare and happiness?

Obligations of Parents

But suppose that the parents should omit religion from the child's training. This would involve the abandonment on their own part of all religious exercises either public or private and the avoidance of all mention of religious subjects. It would involve the restraining of

the child from all associations which might give it the idea of religion. Others might hear of God and of the religions of the world, but not their child. He would be deprived not only of the associations in which most children find much of their pleasure and social delights —the society of those who attend the Sunday school, the young people's meetings, and the services of the church in general—but also of the reading of most of the books which would arouse his interest and awaken his enthusiasm for humanity. If religion is to be left out such a course would have to be pursued, and it might be necessary to renounce all society whatever by going into hermitage. Does all this seem absurd? Then why say that religion should not be taught to children? In fact, if children were not to become acquainted with religion, religion would have to be banished from history, literature, and daily life or else the child would have to be banished.

But perhaps the objector wishes only that the parent should not in any way bias the child's mind in favor of any specific form of religious faith or practice. How, now, would that work? There can be but one answer. The result would be a picked-up, haphazard form of religion, or perhaps of irreligion. In short, the opposer

asks the parent to vacate his duty in the interest of the child's liberty, and in so doing is willing to risk the child to whatever chance influence may affect it. That a parent who so conceived his duty would conceive of duty as neglect is apparent. Such a course could be followed only by one who felt that whether the child became religious or not made no difference, or who felt that any form of religion was as good as any other. So can no one feel who has given sufficient thought to the subject to entitle him to speak concerning it. The parent has his duty as well as the child its rights.

Rights of the Community

Then, too, the community has its rights as well as the child. This is recognized in our truant and compulsory school laws. Too great repression of individuality is, of course, to be avoided; but, on the other hand, so is too great development of individuality. Associated life is possible only between those who by similar training are brought into reasonable harmony of taste and habit. This involves the elimination of all the more prominent idiosyncrasies—in short a rigid process of leveling among the youth of any land. If the individual does not by this system come to his

full development he at least becomes of use to his fellow-men. One of the most important differences between animals and men is that the adults of the former are of very little, while those of the latter are of great, use to each other. In this connection the length of human infancy as compared with that of animals becomes very significant. With his greater capacity of individualization a brief infancy would render the human individual incapable of associated life. In other words, the infancy of human beings is greatly extended, apparently in order to secure the adjustment of each individual's special capabilities to the general condition so that he can be of the greatest use to the society in which he is to live. The community has a right to demand that its younger members shall be so brought up as to be useful to society at large and not as freaks. Only the rankest egoism can deny this. And as the general consensus of opinion is that religion adds greatly to the common benefit the community rightly condemns those few individuals who oppose the religious training of children.

Rights of the Parents

The parents, too, have some rights as compared with the child. But especially as the

custodians of the youthful life must they employ the most effective methods for developing its highest character. Apart from religion there are no thoroughly effective ethical motives. This is very generally acknowledged by ethicists, and it is the tendency to a relative over-emphasis of religion as compared with the morality that ought to accompany it, not a denial of the value of religion, which has led to the organization of ethical culture societies. So, also, it is not disregard of religion as an ethical motive that has led to the almost universal abandonment of religious instruction in the public schools, but a recognition of the fact that the formal instruction in religion possible in the school fails of both the religious and the moral results desired while, of necessity, it runs counter to the religious convictions of some of the patrons and supporters. But while there may be some justification for the course pursued by the school authorities in this particular, it is plain enough to anyone who studies the matter that moral instruction and moral training must be carried on in such schools at a great disadvantage. The most efficient motives Felix Adler recognizes, in his *Moral Instruction of Children,* are the appeal to the æsthetic, the intellectual,

and the emotional faculty. That this appeal has a certain value is frankly admitted, and the moral instructor may need to avail himself of these motives. But however useful they may be, they are not comparable to the religious sanction when rightly apprehended. That abuses of the religious motive are possible does not argue against its proper use.

Utility of Child Religion

The propriety of child religion is further seen in its utility. Many of the noblest specimens of Christian manhood and womanhood are found among those who were trained in the habits and dispositions of religion from infancy. Such was the case with the Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, who, in his *Recollections of a Long Life,* tells us that he cannot name any day or place of his conversion; but that his mother's steady and constant influence from his infancy led him gradually along, and that it was under her patient training and by the power of the Holy Spirit working through her agency that he grew into a religious life. It is difficult for those accustomed to the influence of revival methods to appreciate the value of religious training. But wherever it has been faithfully tried this method has proved suc-

cessful. Nor is there here any purpose to belittle or decry the properly conducted revival. It has its place in the work of the Church. It is needful for those who are Church members, but not Christians; for those who are Christians, but not members; and for those who are both Christians and members, as well as for those who are neither Christians nor members. But it is especially needed and designed for the last-named class, and therefore should not be permitted to usurp the place of Christian training or to occasion its neglect. Christian nurture should be the rule in all Christian homes. For gathering into the fold those who have not enjoyed the privilege of Christian nurture the revival is very effective.

The utility of training for religion from early childhood is seen not alone in its numerous examples; it lies in the very nature of the conception of such training. For while the chief stress appears to be laid upon human influences, the real purpose is the bringing of the child and youth into vital relationship with the divine. The product of such training is not bare of the supernatural. Rightly conducted, it opens the heart to the influence of the Spirit of God as truly as, and more effectively than, the revival method. Whatever religion can do

to support one in the moral crises of life is secured by Christian training, since religion so appropriated is not something foreign and unassimilated, but becomes part of the very being. It is not the religion of the "once-born" or of "healthy-mindedness," merely, which even Professor James affirms to be inadequate for the vicissitudes of life. It is the religion of the union of human and divine forces working together harmoniously toward the worthiest end. The strength is great because the combination is strong. The life thus engendered is the life of personal effort, of consecration to duty, of love for God and man, and of prayer. The nature of such religion is a pledge of its utility, meeting, as it does, the needs of the individual soul at every moment of its life.

CHAPTER III

The Presuppositions

Possibility of Child Conversion

Admitting the possibility, propriety, and utility of childhood religion, the question still remains as to its beginnings. Not a few are ready to champion the cause of the child on the ground that children can be converted at a very early age, even as early as six years, and some would say at the age of four. Numerous instances are on record of very young children who experienced the pangs of remorse for sin, the blessedness of saving faith, and the ethical transformation familiar to instances of sudden conversion. There need be no doubt as to the genuineness either of the remorse, the faith, or the transformation. Nor is there any room for question as to the permanent results often attained in such conversions. The only question is whether such high-pressure methods are as wise or as religiously desirable as methods more suitable to the child's development.

There is a degree of truth in the plea that,

while children are relatively innocent when compared with those who have lived long in sin, they may, just because less hardened, feel as keen remorse for whatever sins they have committed as they would be likely to feel in later life. The point here disputed is not the possibility, but the desirability, from the religious standpoint, of inducing such remorse in the young. Remorse exhibits a fatal tendency to grow weaker with recurrence, and should therefore be experienced very infrequently if its full benefits are to be reaped. Besides, while keen remorse can be induced in the young, it is questionable whether it is not a too painful feeling for the child, considering his general immaturity and moral irresponsibility. The feeling of remorse has its place in the moral and spiritual development of juveniles; but it ought to be graduated according to age and the turpitude of the moral delinquencies, which are seldom great in early life.

A crisis in the religious life of a child may be brought on attended by all the violent emotions known to adult converts, but it is unnatural. Furthermore, it is dangerous, and in most cases it is, and in all cases it should be, unnecessary. There is nothing in the moral

condition of the average child to warrant such a crisis. This too is admitted by many who believe in the necessity of a distinct crisis in which the child shall commit himself definitely to a religious life—in which he shall distinctly break with his past and begin the new life. There is certainly far more justification for child conversions of this type than of the other. The predominant element in them is that of devotion or consecration. If adapted to the child's capacity, if not forced or unnatural, if patterned after the true type of child religion, such child self-consecration is legitimate enough, although there is a still better way, at least, for children of Christian parents.

New Testament Conception of Conversion

Conversion is an event which ought not to be necessary in the conscious life of any human being. It must be said in truth that the New Testament conception of conversion is that it ought not to have been necessary. It is urged upon adults who have lived for many years in a state of moral obliquity and alienation from God. All the presuppositions of conversion—the new birth, adoption, justification, or whatever other terms are employed to ex-

press the new life and the new relationships assumed by the convert—are connected with the thought of a life of sin previous to the change. In the present-day idea of conversion these same presuppositions prevail, whether the conversion be that of an adult or of a child. Conversion, in other words, presupposes a previous life of sin. Unless such a life is unavoidable conversion must be regarded as a means adapted to do away with the abnormal and to introduce normal conditions. How vastly better it would be to prevent the abnormal conditions—the long continued life of sin that makes conversion necessary! This is just what a correct conception of child religion effectively realized would accomplish. A religious life beginning with the life of the child and never lost would make conversion unnecessary, because the occasion for it would be obviated.

Is there any good reason for believing that such a religious life is possible? The answer to that question must be found in the facts now to be considered.

The Adult Convert and the Child

The very best authorities on the subject of child character affirm that there are in the in-

fant evil impulses which are not the result of imitation, but spring from heredity, or which are at least congenital. Thus far even the most scientific observers confirm the doctrine of original sin, not in the sense of its guilt or demerit, but of the corruption of human nature in its very beginnings. These evil inclinations vary in different children, but they are found in all, and they are sure to find expression when the circumstances adapted to call them forth are present. But these same observers are equally sure that in the character of the child there are good impulses which are quite as certain to find their expression under suitable conditions. This does not at all disprove the doctrine of original sin, though it does destroy the doctrine of total depravity. The infant, incapable of choosing either good or bad, is, in original character, both good and bad. It is, with the infant, wholly a question of original, as distinguished from acquired, character, and of character as distinguished from conduct. The expression of his infantile impulses, whether good or bad, is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy. The tendency of his impulses is, however, plain. After a time he may choose either to follow or to deny his impulses.

Considered from the standpoint of charac-

ter, how does the newborn child differ, then, from the adult new convert? Is there not in both a mixture of good and evil impulses? Does not the adult convert soon discover that he is not wholly free from inclinations to evil which he is obliged to repress by force of will and the assistance of divine grace? Such has been the practically universal observation. The adult recognizes the evil impulses in their true nature, and attempts, perhaps successfully, to avoid being led by them; while the child does not know the nature of his impulses, and so gives them free and unhindered expression. It is possible that the adult may be freer from blemishes in conduct than the infant, but this is because he knows more, has within him a moral sense commensurate with his greater age, and has learned to hide his feelings as the child has not. But the mixture of good and bad impulses is present in the characters of both. Neither the adult nor the infant is wholly sanctified, purified, in his inmost being. In fact, these evil impulses of the adult are just the impulses he carried with him from infancy, more or less strengthened or weakened, as the case may be, by indulgence or repression. In inner character of impulse he is practically the infant grown to maturity. In other respects enor-

mous changes have taken place during his development, but in this respect the changes have been very slight.

If the infant and the newly converted adult both have within them this mixture of good and evil impulses how can the infant that grows up with these impulses need conversion? The only ground would be that as the child grew toward maturity he became guilty of voluntary indulgence of these impulses. In other words, his conversion would affect his will. In infancy he indulged his impulses involuntarily; in later life voluntarily; after conversion he controls or aims to control them. If the child could be so trained as to avoid the voluntary indulgence of his evil impulses he would not need conversion. If, as he grew toward maturity, he could be led to control his impulses he would be exactly in the moral state of the converted all the time without having passed through the crisis of the adult.

The point here insisted upon is not that the child can be so led, but that if he could be so led there would be no need of conversion. But, the question of volition aside, the child is in the same state as the converted adult. And he must be, in the involuntary indulgence of his impulses, as free from condemnation as

the adult is who controls his impulses. There are also certain relationships with God of which the adult is conscious which the child knows nothing about. But all these are differences in degrees either of volition or of knowledge, not of native character or impulse.

Why the Mixture of Good and Evil

How, now, does it come that in the infant character there is this mixture of evil and good? We are accustomed to say that it is the result of heredity, that our ancestors for untold generations were of this mixed character, and that they have bequeathed to us this inheritance. Heredity is probably a law of God's operation. It is designed to be, and for the most part it is, beneficent. If it leaves us with some inherited evil tendencies it also bestows upon us many benefits. If heredity is to remain we shall have to bear some of the evils it carries with it. The evils are, however, not any necessary part of human life; they are incidental. One can conceive of humanity without them. It is our business to eliminate them from character and life. What puzzles one most is that there has been so long this mixture of the good with the bad in native character. All good it could not be on any known theory of

man's origin and moral history; all bad it might have been. Why was it not all bad? The believer in God will answer that it was because God, while he did not see fit to destroy heredity, did determine that entire ruin should not come upon the race. In other words, his grace intervened in man's behalf and held him back from utter moral degradation.

There seems to be no other explanation of the fact that original sin does not result in total depravity. Left to work out its history for itself, humanity would soon become morally bankrupt. But God does not leave us to ourselves. With unforgetting regularity he imparts to each newly conceived human being those qualities which by nature it could not have. And he does this as truly for the children of the non-Christian population as for those of Christian parentage. Every child comes into the world with a native character at least as pure as the character of the converted adult. It is the tremendous, but glorious, responsibility of parents and others to see that that character does not degenerate. It may be improper, from the standpoint of technical theology, to speak of the child as regenerated; but it is not improper to say that it is the subject of divine, gracious activity. If

it is not born again it is born from above, and this value of being born again consists just in the fact that being born again is being born from above. The child has the essence of that which Christ referred to in his conversation with Nicodemus.

The Infant Fit for Heaven

There is another line of argument which is still more convincing. There is practically complete unanimity to-day in the belief that children dying before the age of responsibility are as certain to reach heaven as the adult Christian can be. The grounds for this belief need not be given here, but the implications of it are valuable. It certainly implies that the child is as free from faults of character that would exclude a soul from heaven as the adult Christian is. But unless we deny the doctrine of the natural corruption of man's heart, and the necessity of divine action in the heart of man in order to the correction of that corruption, we must admit that God has done for the soul of each child dying in infancy at least as much as he does for the adult in his conversion. It is, indeed, conceivable that God might do that work in the soul of the child just before death in order to fit its character for the holiness

of the new surroundings into which it is about to enter. But while this is conceivable, it is not believable that he would do for a child about to die what he would not do for one whose destiny was to live. The child certainly needs the impress of the divine upon it, counteracting the influence of the merely human, in order to live out its life properly. It is incredible, therefore, that God would allow a child to go into the moral dangers of this world with no hallowing influence of his Spirit upon it. There is a blessed truth in the words of Jesus that the angels of the children do always behold the face of the Father in heaven, the general meaning of which is that God constantly ministers to the highest needs of all infant children. And, besides, if it is true that God's Spirit is always striving with men to keep them safe in the midst of life's moral perils, is it credible that he leaves children without that care? True it is that the Spirit can work upon adults in such a way as to influence their choices while the very young child can make no choices. But is it not a fact that just because it is the passive object of external influences whose force it can neither measure, understand, nor counteract, the child needs special guidance by the Spirit? And while the

child has parental care that the adult does not need, this can, in the best case, be no substitute for what God can do; while there are all too many instances in which the parental care tends toward moral ruin.

Jesus and the Child

We are forced, then, to believe that every child is born into this world with at least as much of the mark of God's hand upon its moral character as the converted adult has. But the crowning reason for maintaining this view is found in the large place children hold in the words and deeds of Jesus, especially his defense of them in the words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Some quibbling there has been as to the exact meaning of Jesus in using this language; but it at least means that children, no doubt very young children, are members of his kingdom. If they are they must be so by some act of God's sovereign authority, not at all with the consent of the child. Such a sovereign act God would not perform for an adult; but as God, by a sovereign act, must either include or exclude children from his kingdom it is certainly no more a disregard of the child's possible future choice to include than to exclude, while

it is far more in accord with God's mercy and love.

Figurative Representations

But what of moral quality is implied in being in the kingdom of God? The phrase, "kingdom of God," or "heaven," is figurative, and expresses the relationships of king and subject, ruler and ruled. In an adult we regard a change of will or, as we ordinarily say, of heart as the necessary introduction into the kingdom. It is not implied that all the adult's impulses are thereafter good, but that he proposes thenceforth to control all his impulses, good or bad, so as to serve the interests of the kingdom. The adult is for all practical purposes, in essentially the same moral condition as the infant, with the exception of the difference in will, which, of course, the child cannot intelligently exert. Both are related to God as his subjects, one without, the other with, choice.

Another phrase, "children of God," is practically equivalent to the "kingdom," though it represents the relationship somewhat differently. So also is it with the phrase, "the household [or family] of God." Whether the figure be that of the new birth or that of adoption the relationship in the household is that of chil-

dren. If the figure is drawn from the conception of God's right to rule over us we are said to be members of his kingdom; if from the conception of God's loving care, children in his family. In both cases we are under his protection and subject to his authority—the protection and authority of a loving King or of a mighty Father.

Neither of these figurative representations of the Christian's relation to God gives us any hint as to the conditions for entering into this relation. Other Scripture passages supply this lack. We are born again—that is, have a heavenly life principle imparted to us. We are created anew; old things have passed away. These, too, are figures of speech, expressive of the change that must be wrought in the adult who has lived the life of an alien from God before he can come into the new relationship. But in no case is it meant that the inner impulses of the changed adult's heart are more free from evil than those of the child. Or, to put it in reverse form, if the child and the adult are both members of the kingdom, or family, of God both must be in the moral condition requisite to that relationship. God has provided that the child shall enter into this world with as fair a chance against the inherited evil

as the adult convert has—at least so far as the proportion of good to bad impulses is concerned. If anyone should insist that it is incorrect to speak of the child as regenerate it must at least be said that the child's impulses are such as the moral condition of the regenerate displays. God has done as much for the child as he does for the adult.

CHAPTER IV

The Training

If the newborn infant is in the religious relationship to God and in the moral condition described in the preceding chapter a momentous task is thereby set for those into whose hands the young life has come. That task is none other than the protection and development, from infancy to maturity, of the moral and religious state in which the babe enters the world. It is the function of Christian training to accomplish this desirable end.

From the standpoint of Christianity the problem is one far larger than that of moral training, though that is so important as to demand primary attention. The task is necessarily twofold: The evil impulses must be repressed and in every wise way discouraged, while the good impulses must be encouraged and developed.

Moral Training: Repression

The usual practice is to confine attention exclusively to the work of repression. This is,

in one sense, much easier than the other work. It is only needful that one be able to recognize the wild shoot when it appears and to apply the pruning knife instantly. The theory is that if the adventitious growths are cut away the sap will flow in the fruit-bearing branches. But the analogy between plant life and human character is not as close as the figure just employed would suggest. Infant psychology is exceedingly complicated, and not every evil manifestation results from an evil impulse. The child's anger, falsehoods, selfishness, jealousies, cruelties, tyrannies, and other outward faults are not always to be charged solely to evil impulses. They are partly due to ignorance, partly to uncontrolled energy. Willfulness is a very unpleasant and dangerous trait in child life, but it has become a truism in modern education that the child's will must not be broken. With a wider understanding of life's relations much of the selfishness, jealousy, and the like will disappear. What remains after such information is gained and comprehended must, of course, be attributed to native evil impulse.

But it would not do to wait for the beginning of repressive measures until the source from which they spring can be determined.

Evil manifestations must be promptly checked. A part of the child's training consists in learning to connect the disapproval of parents, teachers, and all older companions with certain manifestations of self. Otherwise bad habits will soon be formed and the difficulty of the situation largely increased. By such external repression also the child learns to discriminate between its activities, and the faint beginnings of moral distinctions are evolved. Another advantage of external repression is that it teaches the child to attempt self-restraint, and thus develops the activity of the will in the realm of morals.

The task of repression is one that must be performed with the utmost wisdom and delicacy, lest the child should come to look upon morality in a too exclusively negative light. This has been one of the chief defects of most Christian nurture. As a result we have a generation largely imbued with the idea that righteousness and holiness consist principally in abstinence from certain classes of acts. Repression is attended with danger also in another direction. So far as the evil manifestations spring from the inner necessity for action they are inevitable. No amount of repressive effort on the part of parents or others will

avail to restrain the child's activities. Just here is where the break may come between the parents and the child, and the latter learn to practice in secret its forbidden ways. Especially will this risk be incurred if repression is unduly severe or too frequently takes the form of punishment. Unquestionably many of the child's deceptions are practiced because he feels unable to control himself and is, notwithstanding, unwilling to bear the censure or other penalty sure to follow violations of command. But, perplexing though the situation may be, parents and teachers must find a way to restrain the child without damaging him.

Perhaps if all who have to do with the training of children were to study the good traits in them as assiduously as they do the evil, and while not neglecting the repression of these strove as diligently to develop those, the problem might at least approach its solution. Undoubtedly there is here a suggestion of a better, though it must be confessed a more difficult, way. Notice is taken of the evil tendencies of the child because they are held to be danger signals. Love acts as a stimulus to the watchful eye of the parent, who fears the consequences of the evil more than he rejoices in the expectation of the good. The parent's life is

usually one long anxiety for the moral welfare of the child from its birth until it is matured in habits of good. This condition of things is due to almost numberless sorrowful examples of miscarriage or shipwreck in the morals of the young. How natural, therefore, is repression, and, on the other hand, how easy to overlook the hopeful aspects in the child's character! Besides, the evil manifestations annoy and irritate, and patience is difficult to exercise. It is easy for the parent or teacher to give way and to punish in a fit of impatience or anger. Little do those in authority over the child consider that if they cannot control themselves when their wishes are crossed they should not expect the child to control himself under like circumstances.

The Development of the Good

But, though it may be more difficult, the way of the cultivation of the good in the child character should not be passed by. If it is more difficult it is also less thorny, and it avoids all the dangers attendant upon the method of repression and secures all the results that are sought by the anxious parent. Along, then, with some repression of the evil there must go some cultivation of the good. The difficulty is

once more apparent as soon as the question of method is raised. It might be legitimate in one whose purpose is the discussion of principles to decline the treatment of the pedagogical aspect of application. But a few hints may at least be given. And, first of all, careful discrimination should be made as to the sources or springs of the child's action. Not every falsehood is a sign of a deceitful disposition. When the misrepresentation is the result of imperfect perception the child can be led to perceive more accurately. When it arises from a vivid imagination it would, in most cases, be better to pay no attention to it. When there is in it any element of conscious or purposed deception as much can be gained by pointing out the value of truthfulness as by censure or punishment in any form. Even a repressive influence can be exercised by showing up the dangers to itself from self-deception or the deception of others.

This suggestion of an appeal to self-interest raises the question of how to deal with cases of egoism. Here again it is requisite to distinguish between a legitimate and an inordinate regard for self. The one should be let alone; the other may be counteracted by changing the form. A child that looks out too exclusively for its own

interests may be gradually led to know the pleasure of giving others pleasure. One form of egoism substituted for another, it is true; but still it is a less objectionable form, and it is so akin to altruism that in time the latter will come to prevail. Even in very young children the sense of self-respect and the desire for the esteem of others may be so developed as to cause them to restrain themselves in the exhibition of traits which they have been taught to regard as evil. In this connection a proper use of the existence and attributes of God may be made eminently useful. Love, also, which very early manifests itself, may become a powerful aid in holding in check evil propensities; and just because there is so much mystery in it love to God is unusually effective with children.

But though the appeal to self-respect and the esteem of others rather than to shame, and to love for parents and for God rather than to fear, are useful, they are so incidentally and in exigencies chiefly. These things are, of course, factors in the upbuilding of permanent and abiding character; but to obtain this result in its highest form opportunity must be afforded the child for the exercise of all his virtues. It is not here meant that artificial

occasions for the exercise of virtue should be provided. There is an element of caprice in such procedures that must sooner or later defeat their very purpose. Besides, occasions for the practice of the virtues will arise naturally in sufficient numbers. Self-denial, patience in disappointment, self-control in irritating or exciting situations, generosity, affection, and all the virtues will find numberless inevitable and unavoidable opportunities for exercise in the home, the nursery, the school, and at play. At the moment when the child's will wavers between these virtues and the opposite vices a word of encouragement will decide the conflict. If this process of training is kept up from day to day and from year to year good habits, which are as easy to form as bad ones, and which have nearly as much force, will be produced and strengthened.

Too Great Strenuousness Possible

Of course, wisdom dictates that the life of the child must not be looked at exclusively from the standpoint of morals and of character. It has been the bane of much of the training of children that life was made to appear too earnest. This will react, as history shows, even in adults; much more will it react

with children and youth. The joyousness of the child nature must be encouraged. The demand for bodily exercise must be provided for. The undue repression, or the under-cultivation of these, will certainly result in moroseness of disposition if nothing worse, and in such inertia as will render the child weak in temptation. Besides, it is one of the most important of all the elements in proper child training that he be kept employed, and mostly employed about things that he enjoys. And what a powerful appeal can be made to the child that is permitted all reasonable opportunity for the gratification of innocent impulses to abstain from those which will hurt! The child that has confidence in the desire of the parent to secure its highest pleasure and happiness will listen to the loving voice of restraint.

From still another point of view is it unwise to be too strenuous with the moral life of children. Account for it as we may, it is a peculiarity of human beings that they do not like to appear in the light of patterns of virtue. Reprehensible this may be, though probably it is not altogether so. As a fact of human nature it must, nevertheless, be reckoned with. This trait appears in quite young children, especially in boys, whose rudenesses are not infre-

quently the result of a reluctancy to be classed with the well-behaved. The hero of the child is often one whose qualities the cultivated and upright man cannot admire. Observant writers have noticed that even among men there is a disposition to look not too severely upon the foibles, and perhaps the sins, particularly of the genius who is otherwise pleasing. However much we may condemn such a fact in adults, leniency in judgment is necessary in dealing with children. The child feels within him instincts which to his immature judgment are as legitimate as possible. He cannot but feel a sense of unnaturalness when these instincts are not all exhibited. They are in violation of no sense of taste or propriety with which he is acquainted. His point of view is not at all that of the adult, yet he feels some degree of confidence in his own rights. He could not put it into words, but he wants to live out his whole self. It is evident that under such circumstances too great violence must not be done the child nature. He cannot bear the strenuous conceptions of his elders, and any attempt to impose them suddenly or too consistently upon him will render the whole moral life odious and artificial, and leave a memory of an unpleasant moral crisis in his history.

The task may sometimes seem to baffle the parent's or teacher's skill; but some way must be found to lead, not force, the child to see that only one side of his moral nature has rights which he should respect.

Training for Religion

When we turn from the moral to the religious training of children new problems enter upon the field of mental vision. Moral training is approved by all, but there are not a few who find slight justification for religious training. Perhaps if the objectors were to analyze their feelings they would discover that the difference in their attitude toward moral and religious training respectively is based on a difference between morals and religion. Morality as well answers all its purposes for society if it is the expression of habit as though it were a matter of choice. Society, therefore, is satisfied with the habit of morality. But society as such cares little for religion, which is felt to be so largely an individual matter. It is recognized, however, that although it is individual, it is at its lowest when it is a habit. All Protestants, at least, who understand themselves demand that every act of religion shall be not formal but vital; not

habitual, but the expression of a conscious personal feeling. This is based on the insight that religion is genuine and valuable only in proportion as it is founded on continually fresh volitions.

While this, in some measure, explains, it does not justify, the opposition to religion developed by training as distinguished from religion inaugurated by conversion. The religion of training would neither ignore nor coerce the child's will, makes as much room for free and intelligent choice as the religion of conversion, and also affords as large a place for the supernatural element and the cooperation of the divine and human. In the sudden conversions of later life, whether in youth or maturity, the will of the individual is somewhat more in evidence because it is the will of a relatively developed being, and because there is something convulsive, cataclysmic, and therefore spectacular about it. These words are not used in an offensive sense, but simply to point out the contrast between such a conversion and the religion of training. But although the child is led to exercise his will in the interest of religion, it is none the less his will. And although at first his choices are not characterized by their intelligence so much as by their pas-

sivity, still as time goes on and, under training and instruction, he comes to an intelligent appreciation of religion his choices become his own in every sense in which the choices of the subject of sudden conversion are his own. It is not even true that the one is led by outside influence while the other makes his choice freely and without constraint; for in every case of sudden conversion the subject of it was led by external, though perhaps imperceptible, influences to make his decision.

Nor is the divine element left out of the religion of training. It is distinctly presupposed that the babe is the subject of redemption, and that its good impulses are the result of a divine provision. If it may not be called regenerate it is at least in the moral state of the regenerate, and that by God's own act. His Spirit is ever watching over the child. The parent does not interfere or attempt to do the work intended to be done by the Holy Spirit. Rather does the parent cooperate with the Spirit of God until the child is capable of assuming control of himself. The resultant morality is as truly the product of human and divine cooperation as it is in the case of the adult who is suddenly converted. As soon and as completely as possible the child's own will is enlisted in the work. The

only time when the child's will is ignored is when the child has no will. And the child's will would be ignored in precisely the same sense if God had left it without gracious help and its parents without training. The objector proceeds upon the assumption that the child's will is evil and that only, and that it would inevitably choose an evil course, at least for a time, if left to itself. Even if this assumption were true it would really be nothing to the point. Since the child has no reasonable will the question is, What shall the parent do? Shall he allow it to forfeit by lack of training most of the benefits of God's grace, or shall he so bring it up as to reap these benefits? Which will the child approve when he becomes a man?

Emotional Aspect of Religion of Training

A further difficulty may be felt in the question of the emotional aspect of the religion of training. Sudden conversions are almost always preceded by some degree of a consciousness of sin and followed by some degree of relief and positive joy. Will not all of this be forfeited in the religion of training? And will this not result in a cold and lifeless re-

ligion? Suppose it were so. Is not the joy of the new convert too costly when purchased at the price of a previous life spent in the neglect of God, if not in positive wickedness? Dare we incur the risk that the child will never be converted in order to secure a certain kind of joy if he should be converted? But it is an error to suppose that the religion of training is joyless or lifeless. There is not so much emotion, painful and pleasurable, crowded into a short space of time; but whatever emotions are legitimately connected with the religious life are present in all who are truly religious. One need not have lived in sin to know the joy of purity, nor in the neglect of duty to know the happiness of performance. Much is made of the joy of forgiven sin, but the joy of having followed always the voice of conscience is better. Love, gratitude, reverence, confidence toward God are felt by all really religious souls. The sense of divine sonship, the communion of saints, the fellowship with God in prayer, are as certainly realized by the religion of training as by that attained in sudden conversion. The only emotion not known to one that is known to the other is the sense of pardon. But is it worth while to have lived in sin to secure that? Besides, even this will

be likely to be known in some measure to one trained in religion from infancy; for as the suddenly converted sometimes falls into sin which needs to be forgiven afresh, so may, and so mostly has it been, with those trained from birth. The necessity for living long under an accumulated load of sin in order to know the relief of pardon is not apparent. And even if it be supposed that there is some peculiarly blessed relation between the forgiven soul and God, still, unless the one trained from infancy should never sin, he too may know that relationship. But surely no one would plead for sin that we might know the joys of pardon.

Imitation and Curiosity

It must not be overlooked that the training under consideration is not secured solely by the use of words of direction or advice. These are necessary, but the most effectual religious training is that which arises out of the daily life of the adult members of the household. What that life is will largely determine what the religious life of the younger members of the family shall be. Of the two great characteristics of childhood which make education possible imitation is the earlier in appearance and for a long time the more significant in its

results. The other quality, curiosity, is more rational, and cannot therefore show itself quite so early. Imitation being at first unconscious, and for a considerable after period not fully conscious, leaves the child passive in the hands of its companions. It will imitate good and bad, meaningful and meaningless acts alike—words, tones, gestures, attitudes. As imitation becomes conscious the child instinctively imitates or, more properly, produces within itself the feelings which certain words, tones, gestures, and attitudes express in the adult. When imitation becomes fully conscious the child chooses individuals as ideals which it strives to be like. In all but this last stage the wordless language of acts and acted emotions impresses itself powerfully upon the child mind and character. And as the child within certain limits tends to reproduce, during its earlier years, the life of the parents—their ways, their points of view, their desires and aspirations, their emotions—so the type of parental piety will be almost certain to reappear in the child according to its capacity. Prayer, Bible reading, and natural, unaffected religious conversation in the home will induce the desire for them in the mind of the child. Reverence for sacred things and genuine de-

votion to the interests of God's kingdom on earth on the part of the parents will generate like states of mind and action in the children, who will grow up to respect and expect in themselves what they saw and respected in their parents. In short, the religion of the parents will be the religion of the children.

CHAPTER V

The Teaching

THE view of the religious condition and life of children here maintained does not propose to make children Christians by teaching, but to train children who already hold a firmly established place in the kingdom of God as such children ought to be trained. Nevertheless, a certain amount and kind of teaching is necessary to the best results.

Training implies absolute or relative passivity, and may be begun long before teaching is possible. Teaching appeals to intelligence and reason, though it may also be an aid in right training. Nevertheless religious and moral teaching should not be postponed until reason develops the power of intelligent choice. Facts have their practical bearings, and even a very young mind is sufficiently logical to draw correct practical inferences from the facts, though the power to frame the inferences into propositions may be altogether lacking. It is for this reason that Bible stories and biographies are so helpful to the religious life of children and youth. The moral and religious lessons latent in them are felt

as a power in the life long before an analysis of the causes thereof is possible to the child.

The ultimate purpose of all true teaching and education, whether of children or adults, should be, as it was among the Stoics, the production and development of character. It may be proved by statistics that the diffusion of intelligence alone does not result in a reduction of the quantity of vice in any community. Nevertheless, all knowledge and intellectual culture tend toward the elevation of a character already virtuous, while it prevents men from falling into many hurtful delusions. Most of the fanaticism of the world arises from ignorance, though in some instances it is ignorance parading as the loftiest wisdom. An intelligent Christianity is, all other things being equal, better than an ignorant Christianity. And while knowledge is not the main element in religion, the great Christian facts must be known in order to secure Christian results. Scripture knowledge exerts a powerful tendency toward the promotion of morality.

Subject-Matter of Religious Instruction

The first question that confronts those who have to do with the religious instruction of children pertains to the subject-matter. What shall be taught? This is a question the customary answer to which sadly needs revision. It used to be assumed that the Catechism should be taught consecutively until all the questions and answers, from the doctrine of God to the doctrine of the last things, were committed to memory. This view was based upon the importance of the form of instruction. Sound doctrine might easily be jeopardized by uncarefully guarded forms of expression. And as sound doctrine is of great importance one should have correct formulas for its expression ever in the memory.

One might admit the desirability and even the necessity of sound doctrine, adequately expressed, as a mental possession, without conceding the conclusion that the Catechism should be consecutively taught or learned. No doubt certain beneficial results have accrued from the learning of the Catechism in childhood. But no benefit has been derived from the employment of that method that would not have fol-

lowed a better method. Men learned language in the days when it was believed that the first task was to master the grammar from beginning to end; but as grammar is now taught in connection with practice in reading and composition, and as an aid to these, so it is questionable whether more of the theory of religion should be taught than is needed for practice.

This is no plea for a haphazard method of religious instruction, although it is a protest against the attempt to impart to the child a complete system of theology. Catechisms, as doctrinal standards of a secondary order, may be well enough; but they are not the offspring of a study of the child's needs so much as of the demand for system in the minds of mature men. It may, indeed, be that before the requisite religious instruction is finished the substance of the entire Catechism will have been imparted; and it may be that after a certain age has been reached a careful and systematic study of the Catechism should crown the religious instruction already imparted. But everywhere where the method of systematic religious instruction of children has been in vogue there is a growing feeling that it fails to accomplish the desired results, and in not a few cases prevents them. In Germany and

in France there is a powerful reaction against prevailing methods on the ground that they are worse than useless. It is felt that if the religious results so much desired are to be attained there must no longer be so complete a divorce between the instruction and the life. Instead of the stress being laid upon the subject-matter it must be laid upon the ends to be gained by its impartation. Somehow a vital connection must be made between theory and practice. This is impossible as long as the amount of material to be taught and learned absorbs so completely the energies both of teacher and taught.

But the most important modification in the religious instruction of the young must come in the better understanding of the purpose of instruction. If the instruction is designed to make theologians the present method is not so far out of the way. But if the instruction is designed to point out the way of life and to shed light upon it the modern conceptions of pedagogy must be adopted. It is unfortunate that there has been no adequate study of the development of the child's religious life with a view to the preparation of a course of instruction adapted to it. This lack is, however, less felt simply because the end and aim of instruc-

tion is practical, not theoretical, knowledge. Such handbooks as those suggested are necessary only for the parent and teacher, not at all for the child. Any wise instructor can judge for himself what religious teaching a child needs, or rather in what department such teaching falls, by the questions it asks and the acts and feelings the instructor wishes to secure. But it would be advantageous to the instructor, whether parent or teacher, if he could have access to carefully prepared manuals, in which the results of exact research into childhood religious development were set forth.

The Profession of Parenthood

This is all the more necessary since not alone the proper training of the child demands instruction suitable to its peculiar exigencies, but also because the child is likely at any moment to ask questions demanding the most accurate and extended information and the greatest pedagogical wisdom on the part of the parent or teacher. Dr. Oppenheim, in his book on *The Development of the Child,* has a chapter entitled "The Profession of Maternity." He might have enlarged the scope by entitling it "The Profession of Parenthood." Very certain is it that to be a good parent requires an

amount and a variety of knowledge, a practical wisdom and skill in the management and culture of a human being, which surpasses the demands of some other professions. But in the present order of things the training of the children falls mostly to the mother. If she could understand the dignity as well as the importance of her vocation it would seem that she would prepare carefully for her office. Religiously considered, this would demand no inconsiderable acquaintance with the theory of morals and religion, as well as of Scripture and ecclesiastical history. It would also demand a thorough knowledge of the laws of human development and a quick and ready command of all her theological information. Thus she would be prevented from committing the dangerous error of teaching what must afterward be unlearned and from having to resort to the subterfuge of postponing to a future date an answer to the questions of her child.

Demand for Accuracy

While religious instruction must of necessity be more or less piecemeal in character, it should in all cases be accurate. It is better to confess ignorance than to teach error. Almost any answer to its question will satisfy the child's

mind at the time. Its curiosity is greater than its power of reason. But there comes a time when the reason will assert itself, and then answers will be weighed. The child's balances may not be very exact. It may see difficulties which would not be apparent in its later life. At the time, however, the difficulty is very real. Then the instructor must be prepared to say authoritatively that the difficulty will solve itself in due time. But what if it is a difficulty as strongly felt by adults as by children? What if it be a doctrine that ought to be given up? Fatal consequences may easily result from clinging to a doctrine that cannot but be rejected when the child grows to maturity. Many a youth's faith has suffered serious damage, not to say shipwreck, by his having been taught in childhood doctrines that cannot be sustained in the light of later acquisitions of knowledge. The introduction of the doctrine of the evolutionary theory of creation wrought havoc with the religious faith of unnumbered multitudes partly because it seemed to contradict the teachings of the Bible, which were declared to be infallible even in matters of science. The remainder of the damage done was due to a false doctrine of the relation of God to the world. The doctrine of the Bible as the record

of God's progressive revelation of himself to man, and of God as immanent in the world, would have prevented all the disaster. Fortunately, the essentials of Christian doctrine, so far as they are necessary to the support of Christian practice, are untouched by modern thought. If there are any doctrines which have only speculative significance they are not so important as to cause grief should they have to be forfeited. In any event they do not call for consideration here, since the plea now made is that only those doctrines shall be taught which have practical significance. The all-controlling principles of the teaching of doctrine are, first, that nothing should be imparted which is not either demanded by the exigencies of the child's development or elicited in response to the child's curiosity; and second, that whatever instruction is imparted shall be correct as far as it goes, capable of bearing the light of investigation in later years.

Place of the Bible

While the doctrinal teaching should be occasional rather than systematic, there should be a systematic presentation of the contents of the Old and New Testaments. The system should, on the whole, follow the actual course

of the historical development, whether or not this corresponds to the order of the books of the Bible. Nevertheless, the teaching of the contents of the New Testament must not be postponed until the Old Testament is completed. Rather should the New Testament be the starting point, especially the life of Christ. There are numerous books excellently adapted to this purpose, giving the substance of the Bible in simple yet vivid language. A good reader will at once entertain, instruct, and religiously impress any company of children for any reasonable length of time by reading from these books. This will furnish the opportunity of pointing many a moral and of familiarizing the children with religious ideas. It will also have the effect of stimulating inquiry in the child and furnish the occasion for imparting many most helpful religious principles. Such readings will prove popular with young children, and there will be a demand for the rereading, especially of some portions. This will afford an opportunity for deepening and clarifying the impressions at first made.

Right View of Child Necessary

The religiously earnest parent or teacher will need no one to urge him to action in these par-

ticulars, and if intelligence accompanies earnestness an effective method of presenting religious truth will be discovered. But it cannot too strongly be insisted upon that in all references to the child's nature and relations to God and his kingdom, or family, the right view should be taken if the best results are to be obtained. Children will believe in this respect what they are told. If they believe they are out of the fold of Christ they will act in one way; if they believe they are in the fold of Christ they will act in a different way.

The usual religious instruction is to the effect that the child is not in the family of God, but that it is to become a member of his family after a while. Meantime its childish wrongdoings are used to show it that it needs a new heart, that without this change it cannot live aright. In the family prayers the father calls upon God to lead the little children to himself and to take them into his family. This is not without its influence for good. The child is impressed with the importance of having a heart right in God's sight, and with the desirability of religion in everyday life. Parents who thus teach and pray cannot be accused of neglecting the religious interests of their children, and many are they who have had the

joy of seeing their children devote themselves to the service of God in early or in later life. But how certain such teaching is to make the child feel that he is not God's child! And how uncertain it is whether he will choose to become such if he enjoys the gratification of his evil impulses! There is danger, too, that neither the parent nor the child will really expect anything but a life of waywardness from one whose heart is wicked. The child certainly cannot be surprised at any evil manifestation in itself. It reckons itself alive unto sin, and sinful deeds are the natural fruitage of such an inner life.

Turn now to the other view, according to which the child is in a state of grace—a child of God, a member of God's kingdom, with a heart which is the pattern after which all converted adults must seek to model themselves. In such a case the child's wrongdoings are used to point out how necessary it is to avoid them as unbecoming one in God's family. The prayers express gratitude for the gracious work of God in the child's heart and petitions for the preservation of its original purity. In this case, as under the other form of teaching, the child is impressed with the value of a right heart and of religion in daily life. The differ-

ence is seen in the child's natural expectations of itself. Reckoning itself alive unto God, it must be pained at its manifestations of evil. It must, of necessity, expect good things of itself and strive to attain them. It loses no motive of self-interest realized under the other teaching, while it has the additional motive of preserving intact a precious treasure. This expectation it will often be disappointed of, but it is very much to have a child expect great things of itself. In time it will bear fruit an hundredfold. It is not, with a child so trained and taught, a question of being converted after a while, which it may or may not choose, but of maintaining a conversion wrought in it by an act of God. If it makes any change it must be the change from a child of God to a rejection of God. Many might, with but little compunction, choose to remain in the state of sin in which they are taught God brought them into this world. Few young people would have the temerity to deliberately reject the religious relationship with God.

This form of teaching certainly has great advantages over the other. If the training is in accordance therewith, if the child is led step by step to choose and practice the good and to abhor the evil, nothing but good

can flow from the entire process of divine and human cooperation. If, in addition to the suggestions already made, the child be taught suitable hymns and poems, the Ten Commandments, certain psalms and selected portions from the New Testament, suitable forms of prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, and perhaps also the Apostles' Creed, all will be accomplished that need be. But in all teaching it must be remembered that the end is not knowledge, but piety. If the formal religious instruction is evidently obnoxious to the child it should be omitted, and curiosity should be aroused concerning religious truth so that it can be imparted informally and occasionally. A distaste for religion may easily connect itself in the child mind with a distaste for religious instruction. If the taste for religion can be preserved the principal point will be gained. All else will follow in due time. This is a wise principle of pedagogy in other lines which can least of all be safely neglected in the realm of religion. Teaching is designed to aid training. It should in no case be allowed to hinder it. But the wise parent or teacher will find ways of interesting the child in all necessary religious truth.

A final consideration is that the teaching

must not result in mere opinion. If the outcome is not profound convictions the teaching will be fruitless. But the production of convictions is the work of years, and the instructor himself must have them before he can impart them to the child. And he must hold to his convictions, not alone on the basis of prejudice, but on rational grounds which will make them eminently respectable in the estimate of the inquiring mind of the growing child and youth. If the instructor, parent or teacher, can produce settled convictions in his pupil he will establish a character worth all his expenditure of care and prayer.

CHAPTER VI

The Baptism

Protestant Episcopal View

Believers in infant baptism divide as to the reasons for the practice. Large branches of the Christian Church hold that baptism is God's appointed means for the regeneration of the heart. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States may fairly be taken as a representative of this view. In its office for the Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants found in the Book of Common Prayer all the presuppositions are in favor of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. In the first address to the godfathers and godmothers, parents and sponsors, the minister exhorts them to call upon God that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to the child that which by nature he cannot have. In the first prayer the minister calls upon God to deliver the child from God's wrath; and in the alternative prayer petition is made that the infant coming to baptism may receive remission of sin by spiritual regeneration. In the exhortation upon the words of the

Gospel the minister encourages the sponsors to believe that as Christ once declared his good will toward children so he will "favorably receive this present infant; that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom." And in the prayer which follows the minister calls upon God to give his Holy Spirit to the infant that he may be born again and be made an heir of everlasting salvation. The sponsors are then reminded that in offering the child for baptism, they have prayed that Christ would vouchsafe to receive him and to release him from sin. In the next prayer petition is made that the old Adam in the child may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in him, and that the water may be sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin. The address which follows assumes that, having been baptized, the child is regenerate and exhorts that prayers be offered that he may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.

It is evident that in this office the assumption is that prior to baptism the child is in a state of nature, not of grace; that he is under God's wrath; that he is in need of remission of sin and of regeneration; that he has not been, but

in baptism will be, received by Christ; that he is not in possession of the blessing of eternal life, not a partaker of Christ's everlasting kingdom, not an heir of everlasting salvation; that in baptism the new life is begun.

Methodist Episcopal View

Not in the interest of sectarian controversy, but in order to illustrate the contrary view, mention is here made of the similar office used in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as found in the Book of Discipline. The Protestant Episcopal office is an almost verbatim reproduction of the office in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. The Methodist Episcopal office is taken from the same source as the Protestant Episcopal, but shows important modifications. It eliminates about everything that could suggest that prior to baptism the child is not in a state of grace or the fact or need of regeneration in baptism, and it implies throughout that the child is in a religious relation to God of which baptism is merely the recognition. It recognizes that God by his bounteous mercy has redeemed the child by the blood of his Son, and has included children as partakers of the gracious benefits of his covenant relations with men, declaring that of such

is his kingdom; that baptism represents that inward purity which disposes us to follow the example of Christ. There is no prayer for the beginning of a new life, but there are several that ask for such guidance as will lead the child through the dangers, temptations, and ignorance of his youth; that he may never run into folly or into the evils of an unbridled appetite; that his course may be so ordered that, by good education, by holy examples, and by God's restraining and renewing grace, he may be led to serve God faithfully all his days.

Outward Sign of Inward Grace

Which of these two views of the child's nature is governed by dogmatic considerations and which by the utterances of Christ must appear plainly to every thoughtful reader. But if the child is a child of God in the Christian sense, then there is no call for baptismal regeneration, but for baptism as an outward sign of an inward grace previously bestowed. It is customary for opponents of child baptism to affirm that the practice is significant only for those who believe in baptismal regeneration. Baptists also not infrequently claim that they alone have a converted membership, since they deny the right of baptism to all except adult

converts. But Methodists, at least, baptize only as a sign of a regenerate state, so that they too might with equal justice claim to have a converted membership. If baptism is a recognition of an inward state of grace, why seem to deny that state in the child by refusing it baptism? Good practical logic certainly forbids such a refusal. Those who deny at once baptismal regeneration and the regenerate condition of the infant may be justified in neglecting the baptism of the infant; but those who, while denying baptismal regeneration, affirm the regenerate condition of the newborn infant, must, in all good logic, have the child baptized.

Not Necessary to Salvation

Closely affiliated with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is the doctrine that the baptism of infants is necessary to their salvation. This doctrine is a serious reflection upon the goodness of God by making the salvation of millions of souls that have no personal responsibility dependent upon the Christian character and consistency of their parents. Those who are so fortunate as to have parents who believe in and practice infant baptism will be saved, all others not. Such a doctrine, of however long standing, must be rejected and

is being rapidly rejected by all Christians. Some Christian denominations never held the doctrine. It is in the interest of such that it is here said that the ground of infant baptism is not its necessity for infant salvation. Infants who die will be saved, and they will be saved whether they are baptized or not. The ground of their salvation is that God's grace acted upon them for their regeneration, or, if it be preferable, for their protection from the purely human consequences of heredity, thereby placing them in the condition of converted adults. Baptism is not necessary for infants who die so much as for infants who live.

Baptism as Dedication

But it may be asked, If baptism confers no grace, but merely recognizes it, why is it necessary for infants who live? Why not postpone baptism until intelligence and responsibility are at least measurably developed? This raises the whole question of the benefits conferred in infant baptism.

It must be confessed that there is comparatively little benefit if it cannot be maintained that the child is for all practical purposes in a converted state. In any case baptismal regeneration must be regarded as a fiction, and bap-

tism is not in any sense necessary for the salvation of infants who die. If it cannot be rightly administered as an outward sign of an inward grace, what is left? It may be, and it often is, said that it is a solemn dedication of the child to God. But surely such a dedication could be made, and as publicly made, without the baptismal sign. It must not be supposed that those who disbelieve in infant baptism fail to dedicate their children to God and to pray that they may be led into the way of eternal life. The whole Baptist denomination is a standing confutation of such an opinion. Nevertheless, given a rational basis for infant baptism, it is a solemn dedication of the child to God and of the parents to its religious training. Those who practice infant baptism have at least as much in their favor in this respect as others, and more, since the call to have their children baptized is a constant reminder to the parents of the duty of such dedication.

Considered merely as dedication, therefore, infant baptism has its benefits. The parents take certain solemn obligations which must be more impressive to them than a mere private resolution. The children grow up with the understanding that they have been dedicated, by parents who love them, to God, who loves

them. The consistent carrying out by the parents of all the implications of such a dedication must result in the greatest blessings to the children. Particularly is this true when the parents are made by the pastor to feel that the act is one not of form or custom or display, but of deep religious import, and that it should only be performed with the most prayerful and thoughtful preparation. Most of the failures to reach the good results which ought to accrue from infant baptism are caused by the lacking sense of the significance of the rite. No parent who understands that his child is God's child, that its baptism is a recognition of that fact, that it means that this child is left in his hands by God to be trained for God, can fail to be profoundly impressed with the deep importance of baptism and parental obligation in connection therewith. Besides, if the pastor does his duty he will follow up the impression first made and strive to hold the parents to the obligations they have taken. He is at once the representative of God and of the Church, with both of whom the parents have made a solemn contract. The Church thus acquires the right to urge the parents to perform their whole duty, whether they be members of the Church or not. Particularly if the parents are known to be

themselves not as religiously alive as they ought to be should the pastor by all wise yet efficient means hold them to their obligations so solemnly assumed. If this can be done the results will be sure.

Children of the Unchurched

The justification for the baptism of the children of those who, whether members of the Church or not, are not actively engaged in Christian work is found in the right of the children to baptism, and in the claim this baptism gives the Church upon the child and the parents. The claim of the Church upon a child whom it has baptized at the request of the parents is certainly greater than that upon one whom it has not baptized. This should be carefully explained to all parents who present their children for baptism, and the claim of the Church should neither be relinquished nor neglected. By baptizing the child the Church itself assumes certain duties which it neglects at peril to its own religious life and that of the child. By a mutual agreement cooperation between parents and Church is made possible and obligatory in the interest of the child. The Church not only has the right to expect the parents to do their duty, but it is bound to

do all it can to secure the performance of that duty on the part of the parents. The child is thereby benefited. But, besides all this, if the Church has duly impressed upon the parents the nature of the act they are about to perform it may safely assume that they are not wholly indifferent to religion and religious obligations. If the Church follows this up as it should there is every reason to believe that the parents will erelong take upon themselves the duties of religion in a still wider sphere, allying themselves openly and actively with the Church in all its Christian activities. With the prospect of securing such benefits to both parents and children it seems as though the baptism of the children of unconverted parents should not be refused. But if neither the parents nor the Church intend to do their duty infant baptism is a solemn farce.

Recognition of God's Work

Infant baptism will fail of its full results if it is not understood as something more than a dedication of the child to God. It must be understood as a recognition of God's work already wrought in the child's soul. It then becomes the first act in a long and self-consistent process of religious training and in-

struction for the child. The assumption must be that as God wrought in the child's soul without its cooperation all possible blessing, so the parent must do for the child without its cooperation all that is humanly possible. It is much for a parent to say to the child that it belongs to God by God's own act, and it is much to be able to say to the child that because of God's act the parent gave it the corresponding sign of baptism. To postpone that sign in order to secure the consent of the child is to offer God a rebuke for not waiting for a similar consent. To assume that the child may repudiate God's act is to open the way for such a repudiation. There should never be the slightest suggestion, in any act or omission to act, either on the part of the parents or the Church, that it can be thought of that the child will reject God. It belongs to God; it is baptized and dedicated to God, the parents giving it over to him and accepting it back as a sacred trust; it is to be trained and taught for God; it does not in any sense hold any religious or irreligious relation to any but to God. Thus understood and acted upon, infant baptism becomes one of the most important events in a child's life. It confers nothing at the time, but it opens the way for

future benefits of the most blessed character. With this conception of baptism the question should not be, "What is the benefit of infant baptism?" but, "By what right do you withhold from the child the outward sign of the inward grace wrought by God's own act?" "How dare we treat one of God's children, because he is too young to demand his rights, as though he were an alien from God?"

Futile Arguments Against Infant Baptism

An objection to infant baptism is sometimes based upon the fact that persons baptized in infancy may not, as adults, be satisfied either with the mode or with the fact that they had no voluntary part in it. This difficulty will continue with us as long as there are those whose bondage to forms blinds them to the truth that it is the spirit that maketh alive. Nevertheless, there should be no hesitation in rebaptizing anyone whose conscience demands it. This takes away the objection at once, and makes it possible for us to give children the benefit of baptism as a consistent human recognition of what God has done for them. However, if all those who have to do with the instruction of the child are themselves correctly

instructed there will be little danger that when he grows up he will be discontented with the form of his baptism. All such will know that there is no way of determining whether or not there was uniformity as to the mode of baptism in New Testament times. They will know that if the exact mode of baptism is of any account sticklers for that supposed mode do not themselves follow it consistently. They will know that if Christ and the apostles ordained any particular mode of baptism it is not known what it was, and that it was the only ceremony which they did fix for succeeding generations. They will know that in the absence of any information to the effect that a particular mode was authoritatively established we are authorized by the spirit of Christian liberty to determine the mode for ourselves. They will know that in Christianity the spirit is everything, the form nothing.

As to the lack of voluntary participation in the baptism, it must be said that if the subject of it understands that it is an outward sign of an inward grace, it should make no difference whether he was voluntarily baptized or not, unless he were baptized in spite of his protest that he was not in sympathy with the act of God. This is, of course, impossible to a child. Be-

sides, infant baptism does not forbid, but really presupposes, an act on the part of the child when he comes to years, when he ratifies God's act and assumes publicly the obligations God's act imposes upon him. Here is all the room anyone needs for his voluntary participation. Still, if, owing to pernicious teaching, anyone desires to be baptized on his own account, let him be ungrudgingly gratified. It is, at most, but a repetition of the sign.

Another objection to infant baptism is founded upon the silence of the New Testament on the subject. But there is no reason why one should expect that infant baptism should be treated there. The New Testament is a book dealing almost entirely with adults. The conditions precedent to baptism are those suitable to adults. But even here the idea that baptism is a recognition of belief cannot be maintained. No doubt the situation could be summed up in the formula, "Believe and be baptized." But the belief was in order to salvation; and the baptism recognized the salvation, not the means of it. Therefore if we believe that children are in a saved state by God's sovereign act without their cooperation through faith, baptism must be given them though not a word is said about it in the New

Testament. If baptism is a recognition of belief, the means or condition of adult conversion or salvation, then it should not be bestowed upon children; but if it is a recognition of the work of God, then they should be baptized. Besides, there is so little in the New Testament on the subject of baptism that it is unreasonable to suppose nothing is left to the judgment of the developing Church.

It is not so certain, however, that there is no hint of infant baptism in the New Testament. Those Christian households that were baptized, of which there must have been many, would certainly differ widely from most modern households if they had had no children in them. Irenæus in the second century referred probably, Tertullian about the close of the second century referred certainly, to infant baptism as a custom in no sense new. Tertullian argued against it, not as an innovation subsequent to the times of the apostles, but on the ground that children were not capable of receiving the preliminary instruction. He was thinking of heathen conditions. In a Christian home in a Christian country the argument would not apply. Besides, his argument was openly and violently and consciously in conflict with the teaching of Jesus. From this we must

rather infer that he knew it to be an apostolic custom, which, in his headstrong determination to have his own way, he was willing to set aside.

Infant baptism was probably practiced by the apostolic Church. But, above all, it is man's glad recognition that God has not left the infant soul untouched by his grace. Refusal to bestow it argues an unwillingness to do in our measure what God has done in his. It is a setting up of our judgment against the judgment of God. It is an implication that one who could be transferred directly from earth to heaven is not a fit subject for the sign of God's operation in the soul, though an adult in the same condition may be. The baptism of young children should be continued in the Church.

CHAPTER VII

The Church Membership

BAPTISM is not only the outward sign of the inward grace, but also the initiatory rite into the visible Church. This is theoretically as true for infants as for adults, as an examination of the forms for infant and adult baptism used in Protestant Churches, such as the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal, will show.

OBJECTIONS TO INFANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Is there not something incongruous in introducing into membership in the visible Church children who cannot possibly assume any of the responsibilities of that relation? It might be admitted that baptism should be administered to children in token of their religious relationship to God, and at the same time denied that they should be counted members of the visible Church on the mere ground of their baptism.

Perhaps much of the difficulty felt by opposers of infant Church membership is due

to the fact that we are accustomed to the idea of adult conversion and consequent voluntary union with the Church. It is difficult to adjust ourselves to the idea that the beginning of Church membership is not practically the beginning of a new life, voluntarily and deliberately undertaken. This involuntary Church membership strikes us strangely. But, after all, what does Church membership mean? It does not mean the beginning of a new life, for that is supposed to have been begun before the formal connection with the Church. The new life of the soul is not dependent for its beginning upon joining the Church, but joining the Church is the public confession of the existence of that new life. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that because the new life has been begun the adult feels disposed to unite with others in whom the same life has been begun.

When an adult unites with the visible Church we rejoice for two reasons: In the first place, we rejoice because we feel that if he understands what he is doing, he will join energetically in the practical Christian work for which the Church exists; but we also rejoice, especially if the adult is comparatively young or has been wayward hitherto, because

we feel that we now have a hold upon him through which we may do him personally much moral and spiritual good. The obligations in which we rejoice the child cannot, indeed, assume; but he can become the object of our care. Very true it is that he could become the object of our care if he were not counted a member, especially if he belongs in a Christian family. But the same may be said of an adult, and in justification of infant Church membership it must be noted that it immediately accomplishes one of the great ends of union with the Church. Much more than this has it in its favor, however; for the child can very early be led to perform some of the duties of Church membership. Gradually the number of these duties becomes larger and more varied, and also the performance of them takes on a more voluntary character. Who shall say that this is not more in accord with a true ideal than to fix an arbitrary time at which we will permit the child to assume these obligations? Are we never to get our minds accustomed to the thought of childhood religion with all its logical consequences? Is the type of religion which shall receive our approval always to be one which has a sudden beginning after a preceding life of neglect or of sin? Unless one

took the position that Church membership should not be assumed until full maturity is reached it must be admitted that there is always danger that it will be assumed without due ripeness of judgment and thought. There seems, therefore, to be no reason for keeping an infant out of the visible Church which does not hold in some degree for all immature people. From the very first he needs the care of the Church, and gradually he can take up the duties and obligations of the Church.

Children Members of the Invisible Church

Though this might void the arguments against the admission of children into the Church in their infancy, it does not afford all necessary positive proof of the importance of their admission. The considerations in favor of such admission are very weighty. The first of these considerations is that by God's act they are members of the invisible Church. It is the design of the visible Church to gather into its fold all who are vitally related to Christ. It can only be the Church of Christ in so far as it purposes to gather into its communion all who are united to Christ, the Head of the Church. By rejecting from visible Church

membership so large a number of those who belong to the household of Christ any denomination must put itself before God in the light of rejecting those who belong to him. This does not, of course, imply that they are members of the visible Church by any birthright. It is just the characteristic of the visible Church that it must have some outward sign of membership. Baptism is this outward initiatory sign. For this reason also in later life it is necessary that the child openly and voluntarily take upon himself the responsibilities and place himself under the spiritual care of the Church. This is what is done in the Methodist Episcopal Church in what is called reception into full membership and in the Protestant Episcopal in what is called confirmation. The outward sign and the outward act, when age renders it possible, are necessary for the assumption of all the rights and duties of visible Church membership. What is here pleaded for is the recognition of the obligation of the Church to baptize, and thus initiate into the Church, all children whom it has reasonable hope their parents or guardians will train or allow the Church to train for the Christian life. Opposition to this is based upon erroneous presuppositions relative to the place of the child in the kingdom of God or

else on false reasoning with regard to the significance of Church membership.

Children Should Be Counted In

As in the case of baptism, so in reference to Church membership, a weighty consideration impelling to the admission of infants is found in its practical consequences. If it be admitted that all children are the children of God it is the solemn duty of the Church to foster in their minds the recognition of that fact. But as the Church cannot foster that thought by refusing them baptism until they come to years of responsibility, so it cannot foster it by refusing them Church membership until those years arrive. Unconsciously, or subconsciously, the child will inevitably draw the inference from its exclusion from the Church that, after all, its elders do not regard it as capable of sustaining a true religious life. It makes little difference whether the explanation given be that the child needs a new heart before he can become a member or whether it be that he is too young to understand what he is doing. In either case it is evident that he is not counted as a religious being; he is outside the fold whether because of his depravity or because of his immaturity. Children are good prac-

tical logicians, and they will, under the circumstances named, be sure to draw the conclusion mentioned or else the other one that there is some pronounced disparity between the visible and the invisible Church.

Particularly must this impression grow upon the child if he is refused the Lord's Supper. It is often argued that he cannot understand the significance of that ceremony. Very true, and probably he will not get all the benefits of it on that account. But shall he be refused all the benefits because he can secure only a part of them? Neither does the child understand prayer, yet no one would advocate neglecting to teach the child to pray. In many cases the very highest benefits of religious ceremonies are reaped, even with adults, not by understanding, but by mere participation in them. The elements of feeling and action are at least two thirds of religion. Nor is there any reason to think that children, in larger numbers than adults, go to the Lord's table out of mere habit rather than as a distinctly religious act. If there is danger of this it can easily be remedied by the parent. So also children do not more frequently than adults lose the sense of the religious value of an act by its repetition. But even if no particular benefit come to the

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child at the time from these outward religious acts in the Church and in the home, still should he be taught and led to perform them, not by force, but by gentle persuasion, because of the meaning of such a course in his whole training. As God's child he must as rapidly as possible be led to do all that a child of God should do. The religious emotions should not be subjected to unnatural stimulations, but neither should the occasions for their growth be neglected. In this respect Methodist Episcopal theory is in advance of Protestant Episcopal. From the days of John Wesley to the present it has held to the gracious state of all children, even before baptism; has given them baptism as a sign and an initiation; and has not, on the ground that they were not confirmed or received into full membership, refused them the Lord's Supper. The only difficulty with Methodism in this particular is that so many of its members and even of its ministers do not consistently conform to their theory. The same must be said, however, of Protestant Episcopalians. By living and acting on the high level of their theories these two Churches could do a great work. More and more are Presbyterians and Congregationalists coming to hold the same theory. And if these four Churches were to

unite in this matter public sentiment would soon turn predominantly toward their views. It is the inconsistencies between the theory and the practice among the Methodist and Protestant Episcopalians which make them weak in efforts to convert the world to their ideas. They should take their theories more seriously and administer them more consistently.

The inveterate prejudice in favor of adult conversions suggests that the reception into full membership or confirmation of a company of young people trained as here recommended cannot mean as much to them nor be followed by as beneficial results as would accrue to a similar company of young people converted according to custom and afterward joining the Church. Very certain is it that it would not mean the same thing to them, but it is not certain that it would not mean something just as religiously valuable and effective. It must not be supposed that the kind of religious training here advocated omits the appeal to the conscience. Rather does it rouse that faculty to steady and powerful activity. And when the time comes for the public avowal of Christian standing there must of necessity be a regirding of the loins and a summoning of all the moral powers for action. Serious meditations on

past failures and manifest evil tendencies will be inevitable at such a period, and all the sense of sorrow for sin needful will surely be felt. So also all the noble and elevating sentiments naturally accompanying any high resolve, and all the joy in the consciousness of duty done, will inevitably rise to the requisite prominence. Though not the passing from darkness to light, from nature to grace, it is in an important sense a new beginning, an epoch in the life. This is, in fact, the experience of those who have been properly trained when they come to their public avowal. It is an experience in no sense inferior to that of the adult convert, though it is of necessity vastly different.

But does it not seem ridiculous to reckon as members of the visible Church puling infants who, if they are brought to the services of the sanctuary where the members are accustomed to meet for worship and instruction, can at best do nothing but disturb the gravity of the assembly? There is, of course, a vast contrast between the intellectual development of the infant and the adult. And no plea is made for taking a child to the public services of the Church at too early an age. But the puling infant will soon cease to be a puling

infant. In a very short while he will be able to feel the difference between being counted in and being counted out of the fold. In his thoughtlessness and restlessness he may cause some annoyance and inconvenience, but if he is not made to feel at home in the Church in very early years it may be exceedingly difficult in later years to naturalize him. It seemed ridiculous enough, no doubt, to the disciples of Jesus that mothers should presume to interrupt the high intercourse Jesus was holding with the adult population of Galilee by bringing their children to him. But the Master's standards of judgment and ours are quite different. No sentimentality is needed to make a thoughtful man feel the exceeding importance of the child. It is a mere accident of earlier birth, and in no way to our particular credit, that we have attained to the development of greater age. God, who sees the end from the beginning, does not despise one of these little ones. Perhaps in his sight we are not as much wiser than these children as we think we are. In any case he prizes them, and therefore we must prize them.

Instead of this how many regard their presence in the church as a sort of mark of inferiority! If they are numerous in any service we sneeringly call that service a Sunday school,

as though that branded it as something quite contemptible in the estimate of a full-grown man. Without any purpose to determine the wisdom or unwisdom of having children and adults present in the same service, it must be insisted upon that the feeling of contempt for children as Church members is un-Christlike and highly censurable. The Church as a Church must count the children in, not out. It must solve the problem of keeping them in, not of getting them in. It must make them feel that they are welcome in God's family gatherings. It must make those gatherings so attractive to them at first and so helpful later that they will never prefer absence to presence. They should be treated with as much consideration in God's family as they receive in the earthly family. The pastor in his visitations from house to house must not ignore the children, nor must he deal with them condescendingly. In a few years he will crave their affection and confidence. Why should he first alienate them and then mourn because they do not revere him? It may give him some trouble to do his duty by them; but God has set him his task, and God will hold him to account. If the Church and the pastor allow the little ones to grow up without the warmest

affection for the Church the blood of these children will be on their heads. The pitiful fact comes out in Starbuck's statistics that Church and pastor occupy a relatively small place among the external influences leading children and youth into the religious life. The remedy for this is in the hands of Churches and pastors themselves.

A Grave Defect

There is some grave defect in that system which permits so many young people to slip away from the Church at the age of fifteen or thereabouts. This is the age which any experienced observer will recognize as the most religiously impressible age. It is the age when the largest numbers of young people are converted, but strangely enough also the age when the largest number of young people forsake the Church forever. How shall we explain this anomaly that just when we ought to expect the best results we grieve to find our hopes blighted? The answer is not far to seek. Three facts account for the situation:

The first is that so many of these young people have been allowed to grow up in sin on the ground that nothing but a sudden and radical change of heart can avail. For the coming of this change parents and pastors have prayed,

while evil habits have been rooting themselves and the love of pleasure instead of the love of God has been growing upon them. The children have been taught that with their evil nature nothing else is to be expected, and they have acted upon the truth of the teaching. A better device for hardening children in sin and alienating them from God Satan never invented. The impressible age religiously is also the impressible age in many other directions. The struggle comes on, and all thoughtful people tremble for the outcome. And well may they tremble.

The second determining factor in the dire result is that the child has been brought up to think of himself as outside the number of God's own. Now, when he is pleaded with to give himself to God it can only be on the presupposition that God stands off and says, "Do it or not, as you will; but remember that the damage is all to yourself if you do not." Why else did God wait till now to make this young soul his own? We may talk of God's love all we will to the youth, and he will feel, though he may not express, the thought that if God really wanted him for his own he would have made him his own long ago.

The third element in this destructive process

is the attitude of the Church. As the youth comes to think of it he finds that according to the teaching he has received and as best he can judge from the action of the Church God has counted him out and the Church has counted him out. He is a sinner, and he is out. He inventories himself. He cannot see that he is actually worse than many others. He loves his sins, that he has been taught he could not resist without a new heart and which have grown with his years. God does not love him as he loves his converted children, and therefore the youth does not love God as he ought. The Church has always treated him with comparative indifference if not with contempt, and he does not love the Church. It is a powerful combination to overcome. The outside world offers its allurements. Here is something tangible whose delights he knows. He hesitates, and finally he refuses to turn away from them to the problematical pleasures of the Christian life.

What unutterable falsehoods and folly have gone into the process which ended in this ruin! If this same youth had been taught that his heart was the battleground of good and evil impulses, and that he must lend his aid to the good; that he was the child of God and that

God expected him and would assist him to overcome the evil, if the Church, from the pastor to the humblest member, had been so kind and so considerate of him that he would feel like a runaway from home to forsake it, if the decision had been made to center not around coming to Christ, but publicly acknowledging him, who can believe that the result would have been so disastrous?

If the Church will regard the child as within, not without, and perform its part faithfully the child will not disappoint it. And if when the child grows to the years when he is expected to make his public avowal and does make it, the Church faithfully performs the duties which belong to its part of the contract, the youth will not disappoint it. "Like Church, like children; like Church, like youth," may be taken as a certainty in ecclesiastical affairs.

CHAPTER VIII

The Parents

Responsibility Chiefly on Parents

The importance of the proper religious training of the children is such as to warrant the expectation that all possible agencies shall be utilized in its accomplishment. The education of a human being demands the application of all the resources of human society. This religious education is difficult in proportion as the task is delicate. The means and agencies employed must be varied and effective. But upon the parents must the burden chiefly fall. Statistics gathered by Starbuck indicate that to the father and mother we must look chiefly for the all-controlling external religious influences of childhood and youth.

Parents sometimes affirm that they have not time for the proper training of their children. Then why assume the responsibilities of parentage? Race suicide may be an evil to be deprecated, but it is better than the moral exposure of children. If the number of the offspring must be reduced in order to improve the stock let it be so. To bring into the world

children who for lack of proper training will prove a curse to society or who even fail to fulfill life's high purposes, does not compensate for all it costs of pain and care and money, and is a sin against both God and man. Somehow parents must be made to feel their responsibilities. The craze for club life among both women and men must be made to give way to the demands of the child. The desire for recreation must be forbidden to usurp the place in the hearts of men and women that their children ought to occupy. Parents must be impressed with the fact that they cannot delegate their responsibilities to nurses, governesses, tutors, teachers, or pastors, though they should diligently utilize the cooperation of all these. Money cannot buy what the parent can give. The parable of Christ may well apply here: A hireling careth not for the children, though God knows the hirelings often seem to care more than the parents. But anyone who studies the matter will discover that most of the superstitious terrors, not to say immoral traits, of the children of well-to-do families are the result of the teaching of incompetent, ignorant, or conscienceless nurses. And anyone who has watched the effect of what even a very little child learns on the streets of pro-

fanity and obscenity must feel that children cannot be too carefully guarded; for habits of speech, thought, and feeling acquired in childhood leave their trace for evil or for good on the grown man or woman long after the age when these habits are renounced by the will. The amount of care that parents bestow upon the physical and intellectual development and nurture of their children should certainly not exceed that which they give to their moral and religious training.

It is the first duty of parents, therefore, to protect their children from the moral perils of early childhood as well as of youth. Says Froebel (*Education of Man*): "It is highly important for man's present and later life that at this stage he absorbs nothing morbid, low, or mean. . . . . For, alas! often the whole life of man is not sufficient to efface what he has absorbed in childhood, the impressions of early youth, simply because his whole being, like a large eye, was open to them and wholly given up to them." In order thus to protect them there must be such an agreeableness of companionship between parent and child as can be secured only by the most persistent and painstaking effort on the part of the parents. Children are fond of the new and the exciting,

and may sometimes grow tired of the monotony of their parents' society. This childish impulse should neither grieve nor surprise the parent nor be too much restrained. A reasonable indulgence under proper restrictions should be allowed. It will only serve to bind the child the more firmly to his parents and to secure that relation of filial confidence so necessary to the parents' most efficient influence. But parents should, in their own persons and provisions, afford such attractions as will ever make the children feel that no others furnish them such strong delights. If the due limits of indulgence and restraint of the child's impulses in all directions are observed the bond of union between parent and child will never be broken. Children naturally and gladly take their standards from their parents unless the latter place some unnecessary obstacle in the way. Parents have need of self-restraint lest in their fondness for their children or their fear for them they lean too much toward indulgence or severity. And they have need equally of an ideal which, while it does not ignore all real earthly good, still rather tends toward the gradual exaltation of the child heart to fix its strongest affections upon spiritual benefits. That anything morbid should enter into

such an ideal is wholly unnecessary. A healthy and sane conception of religion in the parent and of the limits of religious possibility in the child will secure the natural unfolding of the child's religious nature and habits.

The parents are the natural guardians and guides of the child's life. The first human influences affecting its physical and moral character, though prenatal, are still from the parents, especially the mother. When the child is born into this world it but enters another matrix, that of the parental affection and studied care. When, later, the matrix for the molding of the child life includes ever larger and larger circles the parents' influence should still be the most predominant as it should be the most constant. To the parents, therefore, is committed also the positive religious training of the children. And here there should be no special difficulty in the case of those parents who are openly followers of Christ.

The Atmosphere of Irreligion

Unfortunately, however, there are difficulties of various kinds. First of all, there are difficulties arising from the fact that many parents do not entertain correct beliefs as to the possibilities of religious training. They either

cannot get away from the doctrine that the human entail of sinful tendencies is stronger than the divine purpose to give the child a fair start in life, or if their views are correct in this they do not believe in all that logically and consistently flows from the premise. Still others who are unconscious of any theoretical difficulties are not impressed with the importance of the training. Busy with many cares, they let the spiritual nurture of their children drift with the tides of circumstance, content if no very vicious propensities exhibit themselves, hoping that after a while the child will naturally or because of some outside influence turn to religion. By far the most common difficulty springs from the relative indifference of the parents to religion. They may be members of the Church and attend upon its services, they may be respectable citizens and members of society, but the atmosphere in which they personally live and which they impart to the home is not that of piety. They are not hypocrites, but they are not in earnest. They do not indulge in sinful tempers or acts, but they do not feel that religion is the one all-pervading quality of their lives. They may even have family prayers regularly, but there is no vital connection between themselves and God.

Such an atmosphere is one of irreligion, though it may be that of a nominally Christian home. It will tend at best to give the children an impression that religion is something extraneous, something to be respectful toward rather than something to be vitally interested in, a theory rather than a life. On the other hand, there is the type of family religion which borders on the fanatical, which the children will discard as soon as they become acquainted with the derision in which it is justly held by the general public. Woe to those parents whose piety does not command the respect of their children either because of its inconsistency or of its extravagance! If parents can, by example and training, keep their children in the right way, what a motive they have for exactly the right type of Christian living! There is a psychology of nations and of races as well as of individuals. There ought to be a psychology of the family, a genius peculiar to it, and in the Christian family the predominant element ought to be religion—religion, strong, sane, attractive.

Parents Who Neglect God

But what shall be said of those parents who neither give their children any religious train-

ing nor themselves pay any attention to the duties of religion; who are neglecters of God and of all the peculiarly Christian interests of mankind? If there is anything that can add strength to the argument for the belief in a divinely imparted impulse toward godliness in the very constitution of mankind it is the fact that out of such willfully godless surroundings come so many of our most godly men and women. Still, while we must rejoice that so many escape the religiously depressing influences of such homes, it is pitiful to remember that the vast majority of the children of such homes grow up as neglectful of religion as their parents are. Of course, as between a so-called Christian home in which the proper Christian nurture of the children is neglected and a home without any pretense of religion in which such training is neglected there is little choice; results will be about the same. But the vast majority of those who are conspicuous for their zeal in propagating the Gospel of Christ, whether as clerical or lay workers, have sprung from homes in which the atmosphere of piety pervaded the daily life, and in which the religious training of the children was assiduously and affectionately carried forward.

One cannot so greatly censure parents, who, sincerely renouncing religion as a delusion or superstition, do not give their children a religious training. We may wonder at their lack of insight, but they are at least consistent. But there are thousands of families in which the parents theoretically accept the Christian faith, but in which there is no action consistent with such a belief. These parents hold aloof from any participation in Christian work whether in public or in private. They would not want their children brought up in a community in which there is no church, but they do nothing by word, deed, gift, or church attendance to maintain the church. If all were like them the community would be churchless. They want their children to be in the Sunday school and to have the benefit of the Christian training there given, but if they are asked to do any of the Christian work involved therein they excuse themselves on the ground that they do not profess to be Christians. The selfishness of all this is apparent. But how reprehensible in the sight of God must it be for men and women who believe in the value and validity of religion to neglect religion for themselves and to bring up their children to a practical atheism! And even if they do teach the little

ones to pray and to do some of the other acts of devotion, and even if they do instill into their minds and hearts reverential thoughts and feelings, how weak and inefficacious is all this without the example of the parent accompanying the instruction. And especially must all this training be counteracted by the lack of example when the neglect of religion springs, as it generally does, from some petty spite against a professor of religion or from the overweening love of pleasure, perhaps of sin, or other similar motives—all of which, in the light of eternity, must appear and will appear infinitely insignificant. What enormous risks such parents incur in order to gratify their unreasonable whims!

It is not enough for parents to say that they place no obstacles in the way of the religious life of their children. If they are not themselves religious they do thereby place the greatest obstacle in their children's way. As well might the horticulturist declare that he places no obstacle in the way of the growth and development of his plants and flowers when he does not furnish them protection from extreme cold or provide them opportunity for receiving adequate light, heat, and moisture. The neglected plant may flourish; some such cases occur. The reli-

giously neglected child may become religious; some such cases occur. But the lack of proper nurture will destroy or weaken the life of the plant, and the lack of proper nurture will destroy or weaken the religious instincts of the child. Simply allowing outsiders to do what chance affords them opportunity for doing is no adequate discharge of parental duty. Religion must be the atmosphere of the home, or the religious life of the children will not be sufficiently nourished. If for no other motive than the good of their children parents should maintain a genuine religious life in their own hearts and at the family fireside. The lack of example and of the steady pressure of the parents are just the greatest obstacles to the child's religious development. The presence of this example and pressure is just the greatest earthly help to such development. If children grow up for ruin in homes where the neglect of religion has been conspicuous the parents have no one but themselves to blame, and they will be held responsible before God. Parents who attempt to train their children religiously may fail of the desired results for lack of judgment. There may be too much indulgence or too much severity; there may be a defective or inconsistent ideal, and this may

result in disaster. But if disaster follows an honest attempt the parent cannot profoundly blame himself; while no one can censure himself sufficiently if, after bringing children into the world, he neglects to exert himself so as to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Attractiveness of Family Religion

Sometimes the weak excuse is made that the religious training received at home may tend to make religion odious to children. No doubt such has sometimes been the result of parental effort. Where wisdom has been lacking and force has been used family prayers have become irksome to the younger members of the family. Long-drawn-out, formal, lifeless devotions, during which the children are compelled to sit like dumb statues at peril of a flogging afterward, are not likely to impress a restless child with the beauty of religion. But if, with real affection for the children and deep love and gratitude and confidence toward God, the father, like the priest that he ought to be, reads reverently a portion of the Bible and prays as reverently and feelingly for each child by name, the children kneeling about their mother, who affectionately throws her arms

about them while they all pray, there will seldom be any disorder, the children will be eager for the hour of devotion, and if for any reason it is passed by the children will beg for it. Wisdom and tact are needed, but so are they in all other departments of child training. Properly conducted, religious training will make the early memories of the home more blessed than any other feature of the life. The Sunday afternoons or twilight hours, when father and mother entertained the children with the voice of sacred song, will ever remain in the recollections of childhood as the most precious moments in which family affection and family religion were combined.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heavenward flame,

The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison ha'e they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,—
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,—
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in heaven the second name
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then, kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

CHAPTER IX

The Sunday School

ALTHOUGH no agency for the religious instruction and training of children is at all comparable to the home in point of efficiency, the church in general and the Sunday school in particular afford valuable if not absolutely necessary assistance. The Sunday school may be viewed for present purposes in three different but mutually supplementary aspects:

1. *As an opportunity for religious instruction.* This must not be taken in too narrow a sense. It does not exclude any knowledge which avails to throw light upon the lesson for the day. Geography, history, science, philosophy may all be needful in turn for the elucidation of different passages of Scripture. Nor does it exclude any religious ideas elaborated or exemplified in any nation or age or by any method, whether in literature or in art; for while the Bible is fundamental in the Sunday school, it is often useful to illustrate or enforce the truth from other sources.

Much may be said in favor of a carefully

graded course of lessons from the Bible. Unquestionably better pedagogical methods are demanded. This matter cannot be here discussed. But there are two things that should be aimed at by all teachers whether the lessons chosen are graded or not. First, the truths drawn from the lessons should be adapted to the stage of mental, moral, and religious development reached by the children to whom the instruction is to be given. The teachers need feel no obligation to make an exhaustive analysis of the contents of the passage to be studied and to give it entire to the class. The verse-by-verse method of treating the lesson is not the most helpful. Few passages there are which do not afford ideas suitable both to adults and children of every age. What is needed is skill in discerning these truths and in simplifying and illustrating them. Whatever other ideas the passage may contain should be passed by, unless notice is taken of them by some member of the class. Second, the impression should be left upon the mind of the child or youth that the Bible is a rich storehouse of moral and religious truth. It may be well enough in secular schools to treat the Bible as literature; but that should not be the chief, or even a prominent, point of view

in the Sunday school. When the child becomes an adult he should have learned to think of the Bible, not as history, not as a treatise on science, but as a record of the religious vicissitudes of the race, especially of the Israelites, under the leading of God's Spirit. If in order to do this it is necessary to point out the relative imperfection of the science of the Old Testament, or even of the New; and if it is necessary to inculcate the idea of a gradual, progressive revelation, adapted to the capacities of each age, until the perfect revelation came in Christ, well and good. There is nothing in any of this to shake the faith of any child; but as he comes to see how wonderful the knowledge of religion was at each stage as compared with the imperfection of the knowledge in other realms, he will be fully persuaded that a revelation must have been given in religion, though men were left to work out the truth for themselves in other departments of life. The Bible must come to be thought of as a book of morals and religion, and these must be thought of as imperfect in the conception of every age and religious teacher prior to Christ. The moral and religious defects of the individuals and nations mentioned in the Bible may be as useful examples by contrast as the per-

fections there manifested in other cases. We are instructed religiously by negatives as truly as by positives. The whole Bible may be made and should be made religiously helpful.

Qualifications of the Ideal Teacher

It will be seen from this that the ideal teacher needs, among many qualifications, a liberal education and a thorough course in theology. This ideal can, of course, seldom be realized. But it does not follow that the teacher should fail altogether because the ideal cannot be attained. Almost all learning, including theological, is so popularized in these days that a teacher can become self-educated for the work demanded. The mastery of two or three well-chosen books on various phases of the Bible and its contents each year would soon equip the teacher for the accomplishment of the best results. Especially would this be the case if the teacher also carefully prepared for each lesson. There is no method of acquiring full and accurate knowledge of a subject comparable to the mastery of that knowledge with a view to its impartation to others.

But if it is desirable that the teacher should know the Bible in all its aspects it is also desirable that he should know human nature in

its various phases of development from infancy to age. The intellectual, moral, and religious capacities of the pupil, of whatever age, should be neither overrated nor underrated. Where previous opportunities have not been afforded or sufficiently employed to furnish the teacher with first-hand knowledge of child life in all its phases and aspects the Sunday school teacher needs to begin the fascinating work of observing children and of reflecting upon their exhibitions of intellectuality and character. This first-hand knowledge of the child is essential to vitality. But the earnest student of these things will rarely have adequate opportunity to do for himself all that is needed; so that one or more of the excellent books on the development of the child now available should be carefully studied, thus both supplementing and guiding the individual's own work.

Besides these intellectual qualifications, the teacher must be personally acquainted with the value of the religious truths imparted. The mere student may be interested in truth for its own sake. The Sunday school teacher dare not view truth thus apart from its uses. And all other things being equal, the teacher will impart most effectively those truths which he has found most significant in his own life.

There is in this an important pedagogical principle. It is that no truth should be imparted in the Sunday school class which experience has not found helpful to the religious life. There are only two cautions necessary in this connection: The first is that the teacher must not too absolutely limit his conception of needful truth to what he has found useful in his own life. No one has universal needs; and it might well be that one individual would find in his own life no use for a doctrine or fact that might appeal powerfully to another. The exchange of views on matters of this kind may prove very helpful, especially to young teachers. Nor must the idea of the religiously useful be too narrow. Things may be useful in different degrees and in different ways; and while it should be the aim to employ the most effective means, still it will often be found desirable to add to the most effective some particularly interesting truth, even though it is less important. The second caution is that the whole lesson hour should not be taken up in application. Truth must be reasonably clear to the mind before it can be made available for practice. The truth must therefore be vividly and impressively set forth before any application is attempted, and this will often

obviate the necessity of any elaborate application. The hortatory element must be limited also, because it is possible to make so many applications that none of them produces its desired effect. Not only may one applied truth obliterate the impression made by another, but if the hortatory element is too prominent the strain upon the child's will becomes so great that he cannot endure it, and he releases himself by listlessness and inattention. The secret of effective application of truth lies in limiting the amount and intensifying the impression by the excitement of interest and by judicious repetition in various form at comparatively short intervals.

2. *As a means of religious development.* The religious instruction imparted in the Sunday school does not have its end in itself. If that were all that the Sunday school is designed to accomplish its work could be better done in the day schools, and no one would object seriously to its being done there. It is just because religious truth is expected to affect life that the expenditure of time, effort, and money in Sunday school work is warranted. It is necessary, therefore, that all connected with the work of the Sunday school have a correct conception of the task to be accomplished.

The Theory of the Child's Nature

And here it becomes apparent that the definite purpose of the Sunday school can be determined only in the light of a true theory of the child's nature. If the infant is expected to grow up for future conversion the work will be of one kind. If he is expected to grow up as one in whom the grace of God has been, for all practical purposes, convertingly operative from the first, the work will be of another kind. In the first instance the teacher will endeavor to deepen the sense of inward sinfulness. He will emphasize the evil propensities and point out how ruinous they are, and he will strive to lead him to resist their power as much as possible until the age when he can be intelligently converted. Who shall say that in so doing he is not accomplishing a great work? On the other theory he will endeavor to deepen the sense of the value of the purity God bestowed upon the child, and as a means thereto urge the importance of gratifying no evil impulse. So far as dealing with the sinful propensities are concerned the content of the instruction is essentially the same in both cases. But with a similar content there is a different method of approach as there are different pre-

suppositions. One undertakes to prepare the child for what he ought to be; the other, to preserve his gracious state intact. When it comes to the exercise of the child's will the one tries to prepare it for one tremendous effort to come after a while; the other calls upon him to summon it afresh for every temptation.

It is needless to reiterate here the arguments showing the advantages of the latter method. If the term "conversion" is to be insisted upon it must be said that the view now maintained proposes a gradual rather than a sudden conversion. The converting grace of God is progressively and steadily bestowed, not reserved for one great cataclysmic act. The action of the will, or the human cooperation, is secured as progressively and steadily as the grace, not allowing the sense and the power of sin to accumulate for removal by one mighty upheaval. The grace of God and the effort of man combine; but from beginning to end, not in spasmodic fashion.

Wherever parents and Church combine to make this kind of Sunday school work possible it is the ideal to be sought for. Unfortunately so many parents and Churches hold the other view that the teacher can seldom assume that this can be his work. Under such conditions

he must do the best he can. That best is, it must be sadly confessed, all too often further hindered by the positive opposition, or at least the refusal of cooperation, on the part of the parents. The wholly pernicious idea that religion is a thing possible only to a relatively mature intelligence causes many parents to forbid any serious attempt to lead the child as he should be led. But for this the teacher might undertake to secure the child's conversion at a very early age in such a way as to undo much of the damage of a still earlier home influence. As it is, the teacher can only look on with sad heart at the ruinous folly of the parent and strive by whatever means he can devise to save as much from the wreck as possible, and often much can be done.

What Can Be Accomplished

Three things in particular almost any teacher can accomplish in the face of all obstacles: The first is the guidance of the moral judgment and the consequent gradual delimitation of the lines of future activity. If the teacher can so win and hold the confidence of the child as to become and remain his ideal of moral and religious excellence he can, by precept and example, determine the child's moral and religious

career in spite of parental indifference or opposition. And he can do this without causing any breach between parent and child. Not infrequently children choose some one entirely outside their own family as an example to pattern after, and testimonies are often given to the effect that it was a faithful Sunday school teacher who determined the careers of the members of his class. The second thing the teacher may accomplish is the production of convictions in the minds and consciences of his pupils. A conviction is far deeper than an opinion. It takes hold not alone upon the judgment, but upon the moral nature. An opinion may have very little influence upon the life; a conviction is a controlling force. An opinion may leave its holder inert; a conviction imparts vigor. But if the teacher himself has convictions he will be likely to generate them in his pupil. This, of course, presupposes that the convictions are such as to mold the teacher's life into beauty of inward character and outward expression. If the teacher's convictions render him censorious or fanatical they will either fail to affect the pupil for good or they will mar him as they have marred the teacher. The third result is an inward commitment of the pupil to Christ. In cases where there is

no home opposition an outward commitment can usually be secured also. Where there is opposition to the outward expression there is, generally at least, none to the inner life. Then it is that the teacher can aid the pupil by pointing out how important is conduct at home and elsewhere such as to convince everybody of the genuineness and persistence of his purpose. Much parental opposition springs from the fear that religious acts on the part of their children will be taken under the influence of spasmodic impulse rather than on principle. When the child is known to the teacher to be moved in his desire to give himself up to the Christian life by feelings and motives proper to him a glorious opportunity is offered for deepening, strengthening, guiding, and perpetuating all these holy impulses. The teacher must avert the danger the parents fear.

One of the most serious problems that confronts the teacher relates to the amount of pressure that he should bring to bear upon his pupils. Very young children are so easily influenced that they must be handled with the utmost care. The teacher should, it would seem, give most attention just to the child's inner life. Much outward expression of religious feeling is unnatural to children and is

likely to deaden the emotions or to produce a revulsion, from either of which results the child will be slow to recover. The wise teacher will not undertake to make the child's outer religious manifestations conform to the type of the adult. He will carefully consider how to encourage every suitable manifestation of the child's religious life, and at the same time how to prevent every illegitimate manifestation. He will have to remember ever that his pupil, being a child, should be expected to think and speak as a child and not as a man. A very simple outward act in a child will mean as much as a far more elaborate one in a man. It may be assumed with perfect security that any approach on the part of children to the methods of adults in the expression of their religious feelings is imitative and conventional, and therefore abnormal and dangerous. The thoughtful teacher will not expect to reverse the order: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. In his anxiety lest the seed he is sowing from Sunday to Sunday may not spring up he should not fall into the error of forgetting that dealing with a child calls for the patience of hope. He may rest secure in the belief that, though after many days, he will see the ripe fruitage of his sow-

ing and nurture. To have his class grow up to maturity of Christian life under his affectionate care, not to see them mature Christians while they are yet children in all their other capacities, should be his desire. And there is no more joyful expectation nor any more abundant reward than in bringing about this result. A class so trained will grow up to call such a teacher blessed.

3. *As a connecting link between the home and the Church.* The figure of a chain is not altogether felicitous, and there are implications of contrast between home, Sunday school, and Church which are not really meant. But if the figure and the implications are not insisted on the expression may be allowed to stand. In any case it is as good as any other. What is meant is that the Sunday school takes the child and cares for his moral and religious life, at least until he is an adult; that it takes him when he is passively Christian and transforms him until he is actively Christian; that when it receives him he is not by his own consent a full member of the visible Church and when it has wrought its office upon him he is a full member by his own act. If home, Sunday school, and Church cooperate these desirable results can be accomplished.

The Function of the Sunday School

The function of the Sunday school, then, is to educe, develop, and sustain, from infancy to full age, the religious life of its members and to introduce them gradually into interested and enthusiastic participation in all the duties, responsibilities, and enjoyments of Church life. While the Church in the larger sense must seek to attract to itself from the ranks of the Sunday school workers for those departments which lie outside the range of the school, the school must also strive to awaken an interest in features of Church life outside of itself. One of the most serious dangers of the Sunday school is that it will train its members to be passive recipients of good rather than active bestowers of good; that it will fail even to interest its members in active relations to the school sufficiently to secure its working force from its own ranks; that it will at best only interest its members in itself and fail to connect them vitally with other departments of Church life. This is a danger, too, which exists as a menace. The school ought in some way to secure such a hold on its younger members that they will never leave it. And it should secure such an influence over them as

will lead them to love the entire range of Christian activity and legitimate Church life.

Correlation of Sunday School and Church

There are those who would regard the Sunday school as the children's Church. This is erroneous in several ways: First of all, the Sunday school ought not to be made up exclusively of children and their adult teachers. Besides, this idea perpetuates that fatal antithesis between the Sunday school and the Church. Somehow the vital and functional union between Sunday school and Church must be kept ever in mind; perhaps the relation should be that of a part or rather a department to a whole. But while there are some errors in the putting, there is much truth in the idea. The Sunday school should be so constituted and conducted as inevitably to pass its members into the more comprehensive organization known as the Church; to transfer them almost imperceptibly, so as to avoid the sense of strangeness; and so to train them that they shall be interested in and capable of undertaking all the work for which the Church stands. In order to this the sense of contrariety between the terms "Sunday school" and "Church"

must be lessened. Sunday school and Church will have to be more accurately correlated in our minds, and that correlation more consistently worked out in practice. Is it not anomalous that the Church should meet for worship morning and evening, while not the Church, but the Sunday school, meets for the detailed study of the Bible? Should not every meeting be a meeting of the Church, the difference being solely the difference of purpose. If there may be any legitimate exception to this it must be along the line of meetings for different classes of people, as, for example, meetings for young people. Perhaps the very fact that the Sunday school has its separate organization puts it into a relation of essential distinctness from that other organization known as the Church, if not indeed of a competitor.

Whatever it may be that causes the young person to feel at home in the Sunday school and a stranger in the Church, very certain is it that multitudes do so feel, and no more weighty responsibility rests upon all of us than to discover and remove the cause of the difficulty; for a frightfully costly difficulty it is. Probably eighty per cent of those who unite with the Churches are trained in the Sunday school; but it is not far from the truth to say

that sixty per cent of the boys and girls in the Sunday school never unite with the Church. One suggestion may prove valuable here: The work and methods of the Sunday school and the Church as a whole ought to be brought into better alignment. Most Sunday schools have some connection with the missionary cause. For the rest of the benevolent work of the Church no provision whatever is made in the Sunday school. Whether this can be remedied or not is hard to tell. But it is sure that the contrast between the services of the Sunday school and those of the public congregation, whether in its more formal worship or in its devotional meetings, is exceedingly marked. Those who attend only the Sunday school know nothing of how it would seem to be present at a meeting for prayer or Christian testimony. The hymns and tunes used are not only other, but they are widely different in quality. One who forms a taste for the average Sunday school hymn and tune will scarcely like the richer hymns and tunes used in the public worship, as one who feeds his taste on the popular airs finds the higher types of instrumental or vocal music distasteful. Could not the Sunday school frequently have a prayer and testimony meeting for a few minutes to

good advantage? Could not more of the hymns and tunes be common to the public worship and the Sunday school? Could not the methods of the Sunday school be so planned and executed as to work more completely into the hands of the wider organization? The noise and confusion of the ordinary Sunday school may be unavoidable during the lesson time, but surely the spirit of reverence and worship during other parts of the service could be approximated to the devotional ideals of the public worship.

The Sunday school is the one meeting of the Church in which considerable numbers of adults and children meet together. If properly managed the Sunday school ought, therefore, to be the one place in which adults and children should become acquainted with and interested in each other. One obstacle in the way of this desirable unity of feeling is the twofold antithesis: adults—children; members—not members. The first of these is taken as a matter of course; the second has no reason grounded in the nature of things. It is arbitrary and offensive as well as dangerous, creating a division which reaches even to the separation between parents and children. The outs are out by no choice of their own, though they are pleaded

with to come in. Why erect such a barrier, condemned both by revelation and reason, and then place upon the children the burden of removing it? But for that barrier children and adults might meet and work upon a level except as to age. All would be counted, as they really are, of the family of God. There would be no aliens; all would be the children of a common Father—brothers and sisters, some younger, some older. If this idea were carried out in spirit and truth, with all that it involves of the stronger bearing the burdens of the weak, there would be fewer losses to the Church by far than now. But while some are counted out and some in, the leakage will continue with all its fearful havoc to the Church and to individual character. In the Sunday school is the place to weld young and old into a compact mass which cannot be torn asunder. Here, at least, the divisive principle of denying the rights of the children should be excluded and the bond of religious union should be emphasized.

There is one more suggestion: Reckoning all, old and young, members of the Church, the pastor treating all as such, the teachers, whether nominally or not, should actually stand in the relation of subpastors to their classes. This

seems to be about the only practical way in which to secure proper supervision and pastoral care. If each teacher regarded himself responsible for the spiritual welfare of his class in the same sense and degree in which a faithful pastor regards himself responsible for all a sudden change would sweep over the face of our Church life. How little this has been appreciated hitherto may be inferred from the fact that of all the cases studied by Starbuck only a very small percentage refer their religious life to the influence of teachers, and of these it must be presumed that not all were Sunday school teachers.

And here it seems necessary to point out that the only one who can bring to bear upon the problem all the elements of success hitherto mentioned and cause them to work in harmony toward the desired end is the pastor. Busy he may be. Enough is on his shoulders now. But if he could bring about the use of all the means and agencies advocated here he would thereby lighten his labors and increase his success. He alone can disseminate widely right doctrine with reference to the child's place in the kingdom and family of God and in the visible Church. He alone can inspire the parents and Sunday school teachers with a

due sense of their functions and obligations. He alone can induce the adult members of the Church to regard the children as their younger brothers and sisters. And though not all at once, he can do these things. His very example will go a great way toward accomplishing his purpose. His word of advice and entreaty along with his example will, in due season, work the needed transformation. In all the work of the Church the pastor is, humanly speaking, the inspiring, guiding spirit.

CHAPTER X

The Critical Period

AFTER parents, Church, Sunday school, and pastor have done all, and as wisely as possible, there still remains an element of danger arising from the instability of youth. For a time the child can be guided safely, and principles can be fixed in the mind and heart which will have a certain regulative influence throughout life. But there comes a period in the life of every youth—it may lie anywhere between the ages of eight or ten and twenty-five—when the influences so powerful and effective in childhood lose some measure of their force and may be thrown off entirely. It is the period when the sense of self begins to assert itself. This new consciousness is inevitable, and it is usually strong in proportion as the character is forcible. External restraints become extremely obnoxious, and the greatest wisdom is needed by those who would project their controlling influence from childhood into and through youth. Compulsion must be gentle, if exercised at all, and must gradually give way to

guidance by advice and counsel. At this point it is that the confidence and affection inspired in children by parents, teachers, pastors, become available in the highest degree. If these feelings have not been produced, or if they are not warranted in the light of the youthful intelligence, the result can but be less of influence just when it might be most helpful.

This critical period has been denominated the period of adolescence, because during adolescence the moral and spiritual dangers of humanity are at their maximum. There are some reasons why the term "adolescent" is not so good as the term "critical;" but whichever word is employed, the critical, dangerous aspect of the period is that which must chiefly absorb attention.

The Sense of Personal Responsibility

The first great source of danger arises, then, from the new sense of personal responsibility which awakens at this time. The young life feels the necessity of taking charge of his own destiny before his judgment is sufficiently mature to perform this duty safely. It is this mixture of self-confidence with immature judgment which makes the ordinary youth appear so ridiculous at times. He feels his self-im-

portance just because he does not suspect—cannot suspect—his own insignificance, and because he has had too little experience to suggest the question of the validity of his own judgments. But judge he must—it is his nature—and judge he will. This immature judgment applies itself to the problems of belief and to the problems of conduct. It is not surprising if doubt and waywardness appear.

Doubt concerning traditional religious beliefs cannot exist in any important sense until the youth attains a degree of confidence in his own judgment. The child may ask "Why?" and "How can it be?" but this is curiosity rather than doubt. But there comes a time when the beliefs the child has received on authority are subjected by him to the scrutiny of reason. He has been often told that he cannot understand the reasons for the beliefs inculcated. Now his overweening self-confidence refuses any longer to submit to external authority. He stands ready to pass judgment on everything. He is unaware that he does not possess the facts requisite to form the basis of a sound judgment, and that he could not appreciate their bearing upon the conclusion if he did possess them. Reasons for beliefs are given him, it may be with the

utmost skill; but because of his lack of knowledge and his incapacity for weighing facts these reasons are without force. He has passed from the excessive credulity of childhood into the excessive incredulity of youth. A few years later the same arguments will appeal to him with power. Now they are useless.

Intellectual Development

This incredulity is not, however, wholly spontaneous. It is partly a result of reflection upon his new sense of his own importance. As he looks back upon his past he wonders that he could so easily have taken things for granted. In his desire to prove that he is to be no longer duped he goes to the other extreme and takes nothing for granted. This impulse finds nourishment in what he hears. Few preachers, even, fail to suggest to their hearers doubts that would have been otherwise undreamed of by the youth. The preacher, the lecturer, the book, the magazine article wrestles with doubt. The youthful philosopher and theologian wrestles with it in his own fashion because others have set him the example. Then as his circle of information, acquired in school, college, and society, widens he finds himself unable to harmonize his new knowl-

edge with his old beliefs. His power of acquisition is greater than his power of assimilation. Sadly he feels constrained to give up beliefs once held sacred. The notorious and paradoxical melancholy of youth is such that he feels a genuine pleasure in the self-sacrifice.

Doubt concerning the beliefs he has been taught in childhood springs, then, from the youth's own intellectual and personal development and from his contact with the outer world of thought in reading and study. It is an almost necessary incident in life. It is one of the surest marks of the change from intellectual youth to intellectual manhood. It is not a sign of inward depravity. It is not deliberate and in the interest of a sinful life. Rather does the feeling that in matters of religion one must be thoroughly conscientious tend to deepen the doubt by forbidding him to accept as true that of whose truth he is not convinced. There is, indeed, in such a line of argument a serious fallacy, but the youth does not know it. Some mature men, even, have been led astray by it. Is it surprising, then, that a youth should be deceived thereby?

Such an intellectual condition should not only not create surprise; it should not occasion serious anxiety. Usually it is a passing stage

in the life of the youth. Time and reflection generally bring with them the necessary cure. True, the recovery may not leave the youth in possession of all the beliefs of his childhood. If he was taught untenable doctrines he is likely to leave them behind, especially in our age, when the search for reality is so marked. But the period of negations is the period of immaturity, of which the delight in negations is a sign. Maturity is never quite reached with a growing personality, but relatively the period of negations passes with the assumption of active duties. Life demands affirmations, and the worth of negations appears less with each added year. Such is, at least, the rule. Exceptions there may be with controversial natures or with those who have been driven into strife. But just because the rule is as stated parents, teachers, and pastors may spare themselves undue anxiety.

When a youth is found in this state of doubt the worst thing that can be done is to treat him harshly or contemptuously. He is a victim, not a sinner. What he most needs and what will be surest to correct his wanderings is sympathetic treatment. The one who can most thoroughly enter into the youth's state of mind and manifest the greatest patience with his

difficulties is the one who will help him most effectually. The youth's doubts may be superficial, but to him they are very real. In dealing either with superficial or with profound difficulties of belief clear insight and the ability to distinguish the essence from the accident are necessary. Unfortunately not all possess the knowledge and skill requisite to the effective treatment of doubt, and those concerned cannot always command the services of others qualified for the task. But in all cases common sense is valuable, and this will lead the parent, teacher, or pastor to caution the youth not to form definite conclusions hastily. The assumption that one's elders are right and the young in danger of going astray is safer than the reverse one. Such considerations as these will prevent the youth from committing himself definitely to unbelief.

Alienation

Closely allied to doubt is the youthful state called alienation. The youth becomes alienated, for example, from the creed or from the form of worship in which he has been brought up. This phenomenon generally springs from the new spirit of independence sure to come to each individual boy or girl. It finds a

celebrated instance in Susannah Wesley, who, at the age of thirteen, forsook the dissenters and became an adherent of the Established Church. Another cause is the pugnacity so frequently seen in young people. Independence and pugnacity will explain the origin of most cases of theological and ecclesiastical alienation. Sometimes, indeed, this state may arise from the inability to find in the creed or the form of worship the needed intellectual, æsthetic, moral, or religious satisfaction. If this be found in any other creed or form alienation from the old follows, generally accompanied by the adoption of the new. This whole movement is facilitated by association with young people of other forms of faith and worship. As alienation may be thus only inconvenient, not morally or spiritually dangerous, it need cause little alarm. The division of households by sectarian differences is undesirable, but when there is mutual forbearance it may even be a blessing. If the new faith preferred by the youth is not too far from that of his parents it had better be let alone.

In other cases alienation approaches nearer to the verge of danger because it affects life's established conventions or even its established views of morals. But this, like doubt, is usu-

ally a transient manifestation, and one that will rectify itself in due time. What is most needed is to guard the young from falling into moral disaster on account of this disregard or defiance of custom. The dark feature of this stage of development is that it is so clearly, though no doubt unconsciously, the result of impulses which cannot always be justified by good morals. One of the most common instances, as one of the most difficult to handle, is seen in the relation of the sexes with each other. Even the most careful early training does not in every case avail to restrain the youthful impulses. Still, if proper caution is exercised by parents young people can generally be tided over this danger until their own better selves can find assertion. Nowhere is the appeal to religious motives more needed than here; and nowhere is the value of a vital religious training, one that affects the life in all its aspects, emotional and practical, more evident. Rarely do religiously trained young people carry their improprieties to the point of moral lapse. The conscience has been too well developed, the sense of God's disapproval of sin is too deep seated, the worth of the moral nature is too profoundly felt, to permit of gross breaches of propriety.

This whole subject of the sexual instinct or passion, though so delicate, needs the most careful study. There is room for difference of opinion as to the wisdom of teaching very young adolescents the nature and significance of the new feelings. Particularly does it seem unnecessary to acquaint girls in their early teens with matters so sacredly private unless something in their conduct suggests that ignorance might endanger their physical or moral future. After they have reached young womanhood the case is different. With regard to boys the matter is not so clear. A passion that comes on so suddenly and with such force may, by its very novelty, lead to danger. If either boy or girl is likely to be led astray by this passion its whole significance should be laid bare. Unfortunately so many parents themselves entertain wrong notions as to the moral quality of the passion. It cannot be too fully understood that it is intrinsically innocent, and even holy. No youth need suffer from remorse on account of the stirrings of it. On the other hand, it cannot be too fully recognized that it is to be restrained, and its legitimate uses should be carefully distinguished from its illegitimate uses. If the boy could be made to know that this passion, if kept

under control, is the basis of manly strength and nobility, and that it will prove his ruin, mental, moral, social, and religious, if indulged, the result would be wholly beneficent. Any information on this subject given to the youth should include the fact that the greatest and strongest men have felt this passion in its greatest force, but that they have fought with themselves until they conquered and controlled it. The principles of religion, if they have been properly inculcated and duly practiced in childhood, will come to the rescue of the youth in this time of danger. For religion leads the mind away from physical to spiritual pleasures, and teaches and trains the individual to self-control instead of self-indulgence. Besides, religion teaches us to devote ourselves with assiduity to the duties of everyday life, and so to conduct ourselves as to make our lives useful to mankind. All these motives afford the young man powerful aid in his struggle for the supremacy of the spirit in his life.

Waywardness

One of the dark phenomena of youth is waywardness, the unchecked gratification of natural or acquired impulses, recklessness of moral restraints. Two principal causes of this phe-

nomenon must be taken into account. The first is some defect of early training. For this parents are not always to blame. With the best intentions and utmost caution the judgment may be faulty, resulting in the growth of tendencies that ought to be checked in childhood. Once grown to considerable strength they may result in a dangerous waywardness for which the parents cannot account. Or some outside evil influence may come into the life of the child of which the parent is unaware. Here parents come nearer to being blameworthy, for they ought to have the confidence of their children to such a degree as to make it morally impossible for a child to secrete such influences from them.

The second principal cause is that of evil associations. These may be accidental at first; but the bad effects flow, after all, from the presence within of impulses to evil which conscience has not learned sufficiently to condemn or the will to control. Sometimes these wrong impulses lead the youth to seek evil companionships all regardless of the fact that thereby his sinful propensities will be nourished into giant strength. The desire for companionship is a trait of the youthful nature well recognized by careful observers. Legitimate enough in

itself, it is fraught with such tremendous possibilities as to call for the most careful regulation. Here it is often sufficient merely to play off the sense of shame and the desire for the esteem of the community against the fondness for associates who are under the social ban. Sometimes the appeal can be effectively made to parental affection. Very powerful is that world-old consideration that, however sweet may be the gratification of passion, and however easy it may be to yield to the lower appetites and tastes at first, in the end the way of the transgressor is hard. In no case where conscience has been properly developed in childhood will the appeal to it in youth be wholly valueless. In fact, given the right kind of early training, the higher motives will always prove the most effectual. In cases of incipient waywardness will the strength or weakness of the hold of the Church and Sunday school upon the youth be revealed. That Church and that Sunday school which have not done their utmost to provide agreeable and powerful attractions able to counteract those inimical to the moral welfare of the youth are greatly to blame. If the Church binds its children to itself as it should and can it will, under all ordinary conditions, be able to hold them

firmly by ties too strong to be broken when they come to the years of youth. The Church must learn that prevention is both easier and better than cure. Whatever boys' clubs or girls' clubs can do to satisfy the social instinct of youth must be done. These measures are less costly alike in money, effort, and anxiety than their neglect. No revival can undo the damage of neglect, and if it could it would cost more than the care which would make the revival unnecessary.

It is of the greatest importance in cases of waywardness that the hold of the parent, the teacher, the Church, and the pastor on the youth should not be forfeited by any rash or harsh act. Wrong the youth may be in his own eyes, but an unjustifiable act or word on the part of those he looks to for standards of Christlike conduct only serves to make him feel that if he is wrong the patterns of conduct are wrong also. In the desire to gratify his own impulses he will be sure to feel that as no one is perfect he need not strive too hard to be perfect. The harshness of those who ought to be patient may alienate him from the Church and her holy influences forever. Such cases are not rare. Our Lord sometimes bitterly condemned wrongdoers to their face; but it

was always the self-righteous wrongdoer who had grown old in his sin, never the young or the penitent or the weak.

Another fact must be ever kept in mind. However these wayward ones may professedly justify their evil conduct, they recognize in their deepest hearts that they are wrong. There is in their minds an ideal which they still cherish. Passion may at times blind them to its presence, but it lives on, and sometimes it allures them. They sin because they are inwardly weak or lack the requisite external supports of virtue as well as because they love the immediate fruits of evil ways. If the ideal were lost they would be lost. As a consequence it is important to appeal to that ideal, to keep it alive, to make it effective. In the end, therefore, the motives of religion, of that religion which does not consist in the mere escape from hell, but in the attaining of the end for which God created us, are the most effective motives.

CHAPTER XI

The Ideal

The Two Standards

The standard for every Christian, old or young, is often declared to be the example of Christ. What did he do, or what would he do, under circumstances like those in which each individual finds himself at successive moments in his life? To apply this standard to our own conduct is a matter of no small difficulty. It involves a knowledge of the mind of Christ which few possess, and it demands a correctness in judgment even more rare. No one can be quite certain what Jesus would do under given conditions. Besides, his mission, nature, and character were unique, and permitted and even required of him some things not required of us. All these considerations show that Christ, whether in his recorded deeds or words, or in those which he might be supposed to perform or speak, cannot be taken, in all respects, as our pattern. If such a standard is difficult for an adult how almost wholly impracticable it would be for a child or youth!

The same must be said for the standard of love. What love permits and what love requires it is not always easy to determine, and under like circumstances different individuals would judge differently. Nor does it at all times seem possible to do what love prompts—at least not unless love is regarded as transcending the transient phases of human life and as looking to the grand outcome of whole vast movements. In any case a child cannot apply the principle perfectly.

It is noticeable that these two standards are respectively external and internal. And while both are in some degree inapplicable, both are still necessary. The great goal toward which old and young ought to press is external and internal likeness to the conduct and mind of Christ, and at the same time the inner life of the individual should be so transformed and molded as to render reference to Christ's life and character unnecessary. The example of Christ and the spirit of love must ever be the twin principles according to which life should be directed. They supplement and correct each other, and if we knew perfectly the example of Christ, and if we loved perfectly, our lives could be without fault. These two principles cannot be too early, nor too impress-

ively set before the mind, heart, and conscience of the child; and they should be kept before him steadily and with increasing clearness of content until his character is firmly established.

But just because neither adult nor child can apply with absolute correctness these perfect standards it is necessary, particularly with children and young people, to set up standards more or less arbitrary and positive. Perfect freedom in the exercise of the moral judgment on the part of those whose judgment is so immature would be dangerous in the extreme. Difficulties in the training of children abound here; because while it is necessary to set up arbitrary or positive rules for specific cases it is equally necessary to develop the sense of personal responsibility in the choice of one's own courses of conduct. The final ideal must not be one humanly imposed from without, but the personal ideal formed from within. The function of parent, teacher, pastor, Church is to help the child and youth to points of view which will enable him to escape the dangers of his immaturity and to reach at last the grandeur of a mature personality controlled in all things by the behests of a correctly educated heart and conscience.

The Inner Life

The ideal may be thought of with reference to both the inner and the outer life. And as to the inner life of thought, purpose, feeling, desire, it can never be too exalted or strict. The child should expect of himself absolute perfection here. This may often lead him into self-condemnation, but this is better than laxity in his demands upon himself. There are, however, some things ordinarily supposed to belong to this perfect inner life which are not to be required. Thoughts, feelings, and desires often come into the consciousness unbidden, and they may be such as no pure-minded person can relish. It is needful that children be taught to distinguish between the unwelcome and the welcome presence of these thoughts and emotions. In some cases, too, children condemn themselves because they cannot detest these inner states. But it is not a question of detestation, but rather of cherishing them. If they are cherished the child needs moral transformation; if they are not cherished, even though not detested, and because felt to be wrong fought against, all is done that can be expected of anyone. The principle that will turn away from the gratification of

a desire known to be evil is itself the principle of holiness.

The inner life has been just now viewed in its negative aspects. But there is the positive aspect also. Of this the child can know but little. To him it is much that he allows himself no wrong. And it is highly absurd to demand that he shall be, in his inner life, a paragon of virtue in the positive sense. Negative perfection is requisite to spiritual health. Positive perfection is the result of forces and conditions impossible certainly to the child, even if possible to the adult. And yet the child can be led to desire to be positively good and holy. Especially is this possible if holiness is conceived of as love. The spirit of unselfishness, of kindliness, of helpfulness, of charity in judgment, and the like can be and ought to be inculcated and developed in the child heart. And if the expectation be that these qualities will be confined in their manifestation to such acts as lie within the limits of child propriety, no appearance of affectation or hypocrisy will exhibit itself. The training for these qualities needs to be conducted with especial care lest the acts be performed without their real presence. The stress must be laid upon the qualities, since, if they are present in healthy con-

dition, the appropriate manifestations will follow.

The Outer Life: Amusements

In the consideration of the outer life the ordinary standards of honor, honesty, truthfulness, purity may be accepted as valid, though some will think that on this point there is room for difference of opinion. The problem of artificial sins, as they are sometimes termed, is more complicated. From the modern standpoint many things which appeared to former generations very real sins appear wholly artificial. Few parents to-day bring up their children to regard Sunday as so sacred that even reasonable playfulness must be repressed thereon. There, too, is the whole problem of amusements, which has been subjected to a new scrutiny with a decided modification of opinion concerning their permissibility. What is the meaning of the greater favor with which dancing, theater going, card playing, and the like are regarded in many quarters to-day? Does this change of sentiment signify merely that people have fewer artificial sins now than formerly, or does it mean that there is greater laxity now than in the past? Thoughtful minds will hesitate, probably, be-

fore they decide in favor of either of these alternatives. And the writer of these lines has no thought of trying to settle the question for others, nor even of expressing his own convictions. But the problem is one of such consequence that parents, teachers, and pastors must have some definite word to say. It will not do to temporize with it.

How shall the matter be treated in practice? Some simply say, "Better not!" Others unequivocally say, "These things are wrong." What shall be said to the child? This one thing the religious training of the child demands—that is, that whether he be indulged or not in these amusements, it be understood that the whole matter is not one merely of self-gratification, but of doing the will of God. There is a caution, however, that must be mentioned. While there is danger in later life of a reaction from too great restraint in these things, there is also danger that in their indulgence the habit will be formed of doing whatever the impulse of the moment prompts. Denial or indulgence in these things must be viewed, at least in part, from the standpoint of the effect upon the will. Asceticism cannot be recommended if carried too far; but, on the other hand, too great self-indulgence can be

practiced. Asceticism kept within bounds has the result of strengthening the power of resistance to outer and hurtful, even though not sinful, allurement. Self-indulgence weakens this power. If the thoroughly innocent character of the amusements in question were admitted there would still be abundant reason for abstinence, if not total abstinence, from them. Particularly is this view to be emphasized in a time when such large numbers of people, especially women, appear to be wholly given up to pleasure seeking. The woman who spent two afternoons and three evenings each week at whist and called whist a godsend proved thereby that she was lost to all sense of a lofty mission in the world. She does not know what to do with her time unless she spends it in amusements. That young people should be brought up in Christian communities with such utterly frivolous views of life is appalling. The question of amusements must be so treated on the one side as not to repress too greatly the joyousness of youth and on the other as to prevent the deadening influence of self-indulgence on the seriousness of every worthy life.

How to bring young people to adopt this ideal of earnestness and the sense of a high mission in the face of the attractions of worldly

pleasure is a difficult problem. That its solution is not always found every pastor of experience will confess. It may not be altogether, nor even chiefly, his fault that it is so. In those homes in which the parents give themselves up to pleasure rather than to Christian work the young people are likely to follow the example set them. Even the views sometimes put into practice in secular education tend to deprive children of a due development of seriousness. As long as children are beguiled into learning by putting it into the form of an amusement no solidity of character can be developed. Pestalozzi's principle, which demands exertion and the constant employment of the thinking powers, is far better adapted to the cultivation of both mind and heart. On the other hand, too great austerity will bring about a reaction sooner or later in the youth of a household. If it does not do this it will induce the feeling that the restraints placed by Christianity upon the individual cause greater loss than can be compensated by the blessings of religion. It is too much to expect that the children and young people shall, in the use of amusements, be able to appreciate the reasons for caution which appeal with such force to thoughtful and observant older people. But

if the parents are happy and cheerful without questionable amusements; if attractive but less dangerous substitutes are provided; if parents affectionately urge the children to accept their judgment until they are older; if, when they are older, they are not forbidden, but rather, while left to their own consciences, advised not to indulge; and if, above all, they are led to see that amusements are not the chief end of existence, there will usually be little difficulty in so guiding the life of the child and the youth as to give it all proper earthly joy and to preserve it from the frivolous extremes into which so many run, and which are the chief source and occasion of the objection to popular amusements.

The Negative Method

Our generation is unquestionably suffering from the effects of a too negative method of treating all questions of practical conduct. Prohibitions have been relatively too prominent. The "Thou shalt not" of the Old Testament is good, but the "Thou shalt" of Jesus is better. The ideal to be kept before children and youth is one of beneficent activity, not merely of self-restraint; of self-direction rather than self-control. Self-denial, self-restraint, self-control are needful only in those instances

in which the useful activities are not sufficiently absorbing to exclude the danger of evil conduct. They ought to be passing, transient words, in the description of one's personal endeavors, and they should become less prominent with the years. On the other hand, the negation of self should be displaced by the expression of self. This, of course, can safely be only as self comes to be worthy of expression; and this, in turn, can be only after the negative ideal has been supplanted by the positive, and the enriched personality has come to some fair degree of perfection. If the young people of the next generation could be aroused to a proper pitch of enthusiasm to be inwardly worthy and to engage outwardly in noble and elevating employments and avocations only, and then kept steadily, without undue strain, to these conceptions of life, there would be visible a marked change for the better in a short time. In some way it must be impressed upon young and old that life is worth living only if filled and fired with noble character and helpful deeds.

And yet it is easy to expect too much of the young, in whom impulse is strong and judgment neither correct nor sobered by the experiences of time. Not infrequently better

lives are demanded of them than of their elders. Their thoughtless and frolicsome moods are watched with impatience and anxiety, and parents and teachers forget that they themselves did just what their juniors are now doing, and that notwithstanding they did not go to the bad. Very true is it that those who have the care of the young must watch narrowly the manifestations of youthful vivacity, and they must strive to direct these untamed energies into right channels and apply them to good ends. But much that passes among grave and reverend elders for evidence of depravity is thereby misjudged. The objectionable conduct is no sign that the perpetrators are outside the kingdom, but only that the seriousness of age has not found a home in the heart of youth. And in any case the true method of correction is not aloofness and criticism. Far better is it for all to keep the heart young and in sympathy with the joyousness of youth, thus winning its confidence and being able to direct its pleasures and all its activities. In its mirth, jollity, lightness, and even in its departures from propriety, youth frequently sees no wrong and means no wrong. Harshness may estrange the youthful feelings from the religious life. Delicate handling is

what the case demands until the tastes can be improved and conscience educated and the ideals heightened.

For, after all, the conceptions of what is forbidden and what is required are constantly changing, especially in early life. All thoughtful, and even most thoughtless, youths experience in the five years from thirteen or fifteen to eighteen or twenty large modifications of sentiment relative to right and duty. But not this alone; in the same years there is introduced into the mind a much more exacting demand on self than was known in earlier life. The youth not only has a better instructed moral judgment; he has also a determination to live up more perfectly to what he conceives to be right. The extent and character of these changes in the personal ideal will depend chiefly upon the example set him by parents, teachers, pastor, and Church. If any one of those whom he trusts fails to be true to his highest convictions the ideal of duty will be lowered in the youth's mind by so much. Whatever the judgments of his elders may be relative to the right or wrong of particular acts, he expects them, and rightly, to live up to their ideals. If they do not it is impossible that he will.

Religious Emotions

What shall the child and youth expect of himself emotionally in his religious life? The question is one of very practical moment. Not a few have set the standard either too high or too low, and have suffered thereby. From one point of view it is an error even so much as to examine our emotional states or to expect any religious emotion. Religion, conceived as duty, does not regard feeling. On the other hand, there can be no true religion without genuine and deep feeling.

In order to a proper understanding of the relation of the sensibilities to religion these must be properly classified. The religious emotions are of two varieties: those looking outward and those looking inward. Outward-looking feelings are a large constituent in religion. Some of these look Godward, such as love, reverence, dependence, trust. Without these and others that might be named there can be no religion in the ordinary, or even in the proper, sense of the word. A correct conception of God is certain to evoke them. But a sharp distinction must be made between their presence on the one side and the consciousness, the strength, and the constancy of them on the

other. In some natures the feelings do not rise to a place of prominence in consciousness. Such natures seldom notice whether they love, revere, trust, until some unusual circumstance directs special attention to the question. In these respects all degrees of emotion must be expected, according to temperament. It is proper, however, to strengthen and deepen these feelings, and a developing sense of God is likely to produce that result. Of this same variety other emotions look manward. Compassion, mercy, love, and the like are of necessity present wherever the Christian religion rules in the life. These, too, may legitimately be nourished. The laws of their growth are not here discussed. On this point it will be sufficient to say that one of the most effective methods of cultivating them is to habituate ourselves to the practice of the deeds those feelings naturally require.

The self-regarding religious feelings stand on a different plane. No impropriety attaches to the sense of safety, of satisfaction, of joy, and the like, so often experienced by Christians. On the contrary, they are naturally connected, in some measure and degree, with the Christian life. They necessarily spring from the sense of love, trust, dependence, reverence,

compassion, mercy, and from the consciousness of being in right relations with, and from the performance of duty toward, God and man. Their presence gives zest and even enthusiasm for all the burdens and pains of life. By them we are lifted above the world, with its temptations, allurements, and trials. They should not, therefore, be despised, but rather desired. The point of danger is in making them too exclusively the object of thought. Religion does not consist in these emotions; they are its efflorescence. If they are present we should be thankful, both for our own sake and for the sake of their sustaining power; if they are absent, or present only occasionally, we may be religious still, in the sense of dutifulness and faithfulness in the execution of God's plans.

Of all these inward-looking emotions none, perhaps, has been more emphasized than that one commonly called assurance, or the witness of the Spirit. Both terms are used, and with some difference of signification. But the fact signified in both cases is the feeling of confidence that we are in right relations with God. There is no reason to question that God bestows that confidence upon us. But experienced pastors have discovered that the desire

for this confidence often proves a snare. The degree of the confidence must of necessity be conditioned somewhat by the temperament of the individual. Therefore no one should grieve if he experiences less of it than he could desire. Then, too, the form of its coming into any heart is conditioned by temperament. An imaginative person or one with much mysticism in his make-up is likely to feel the sense of assurance, or the witness of the Spirit, the consciousness of the filial relation to God, almost as a voice, certainly as a very striking spiritual phenomenon. Others, because they can obtain no such experience, fall into despair. The great error is in seeking it directly. It may be taken for granted that God is more faithful than we are. If we do our best—and no one ought to do less—in serving him we may safely ignore the question of our relationship to him. In the faithful, loving, humble performance of duty as we see it, with whatever emotion naturally springs from or attends it, we are most likely to enjoy the consciousness that we are the children of God. What we are and what we do, not how we feel before, during, or after, is the great thing. These things are written not to discourage or to disparage religious emotion, but to point

out that emotion, especially such as looks inward, is not essential. Our energies ought not to be directed to securing these thrills, but toward the work of God in the world that lieth in wickedness.

It is very difficult to treat the religious life without leaving a wrong impression of the proportions and relations of its inner to its outer aspects. Undoubtedly too much attention has been given, relatively, to the inner experiences. But there is danger from the other extreme also. A great tree must have great roots struck deep and broad into suitable soil. Coe points out that the hymns of the Church have been too one-sidedly descriptive of inner states. He would, probably, be the last one to deny the importance of just such hymns. Under their inspiration about all the great works of moral, spiritual, intellectual, and physical improvement have been undertaken. Church history shows that periods in which the devotional life of the Church has been at once rich and healthy have been those in which the Church has been most vigorous in the execution of her outward duties as she saw them. The great missionary and reform movements of the world's history have about all sprung from those individuals or communities who were deeply influenced

by the consciousness of God or from communities who were so influenced. For every reason, therefore, the devotional life of the young should be nourished. Genuineness should be its chief mark, but if genuine it can scarcely be too rich. Whether in private or in public, devotional exercises are to be encouraged. Devotional reading of the Bible, of biographies, of the best thoughts of the profoundest minds, whether in poetry or in prose, should be practiced. The young should be afforded opportunity for the still hour of meditation and prayer; otherwise the religious life tends to become shallow, unattractive, and ineffective.

Public Expression of Inner Life

The part that young people should take in the public services of the Church must be determined by principles applicable to each individual alone. One who has reached the age to be employed as usher, teacher, or officer in the Sunday school or young people's organizations can make it understood that he is on the side of the Church without a spoken word. His diligence will be the index of his devotion. But if a youth of consistent life, actively engaged in the work of the Church in one or more of its departments, occasionally proclaims

by word under suitable conditions, publicly or privately, his inward reasons for his earnestness in the work of Christ he thereby greatly augments his usefulness. Many another youth is just waiting for some such word from him, and will need no other inducement to join in the good cause. For lack of it he stands aloof. The proper declaration of the benefits of religion as experienced by a young person has in it nothing to condemn, but everything to commend. And if young people knew how much pleasure they give their elders by their testimonies it is probable they would be heard more frequently. Under no circumstances should the young Christian allow himself to be ashamed of his profession. Christians may be imperfect, but no one can justly say a word against Christ. Christendom has often displayed unchristian feelings, but Christianity has never inculcated them. The young may feel themselves unable to defend their faith in the presence of unbelief and derision, but most of the noblest men of the last nineteen hundred years have been the product of Christian civilization. One need not seek to obtrude his religion when he has reason to feel that it would be unwelcome; but there is not the slightest reason why one should hide it, and

there are many reasons why one should avow himself.

Along with right emotion, devotion, and profession or confession should go a spirit of helpfulness in all directions. Every good cause should have the young person's sympathy and as far as possible his active cooperation. He has a right to his emotional and devotional states, but he has a duty in connection with the work of the Church. He has no right to the former unless they are made tributary to the latter. Too much must not be expected of the young, but gradually they should seek to become effective workers. Nor must the work of the Church be incorrectly apprehended. Whatever may be thought of the place of suppers, sociables, and entertainments in Church life, they are not the specific object of the Church's existence. One engaged in their conduct can be said to be a worker in the Church only as he sees in them a means for the accomplishment of some good more intimately connected with the spirit of Christ. The works of mercy and help, such as the flower mission, hospital work, and the like, are much more nearly related to the mission of Jesus. But the specific work of the Church is the rescuing of men and women from sin and the

impartation to them of the spirit and mind of Christ. The young do not always strongly feel the force and pressure of necessity here. But if they are rightly trained and taught they will gradually come into deeper sympathy with this. As they study the Christ they will find that he came to seek and to save the lost, and as they wish to be like him they will enter into the fellowship of this human service. More and more the aim of their lives will be assimilated to that of Christ. Their time, talents, wealth will be placed at the disposal of their Master for the completion of his mission.

So to train a human being from infancy to maturity as that he will never fall into the evils of an unbridled appetite; that he will live a clean, pure, helpful life; that he will find in the service of God and the service of his fellowman his chief joy; that he will gladly take his place by the side of Christ in the saving of other human beings—this is worth while.

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